



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THE POTENTIAL FOR RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN THE  
UNITED STATES MILITARY**

by

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December 2005

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**THE POTENTIAL FOR RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN THE UNITED STATES  
MILITARY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The 2004 presidential election seemed to signal growing religious fervor across the political spectrum. Members of the media and pollsters alike were left wondering what went on inside the voting booth. Religion has long played a role in American politics, dating back to the Constitution of the United States of America.

When components of government, the military, religion, and society converge, discussion and debate invariably follows. The United States military is a religiously pluralistic institution, with members belonging to an estimated 700 religions. The chaplaincy champions religious accommodation and the military itself supports over 245 faith groups. The chaplaincy is at the core of this religious accommodation since chaplains maintain a dual allegiance, as members of the clergy and as members of the officer corps.

As religious diversity grows, the likelihood of controversy increases when, for instance, Indian members of the Native American Church take peyote, Wiccans observe pagan rites on military bases, and Muslim chaplains serve Muslim soldiers who find themselves at war within an Islamic country. This thesis explores some of the challenges inherent in ministering to so many diverse religions, and takes a critical look at areas of potential friction that might cause the Department of Defense to want to take a more attentive look at what such diversity means for the future.

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I felt it fitting to close this section with the most important acknowledgement. To my God, I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayers. Jesus is the Lord of my life and reigns in my heart. I will continue to seek daily guidance from the Holy Spirit; for it is by grace that I have been saved, through faith in Jesus Christ.

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## **PREFACE**

As a practicing Christian, I belong to the majority religion within the U.S. military. An effort to minimize or reduce a Christian bias in this thesis is difficult and acknowledged, but I do not believe it affects the content of this thesis. I was able to incorporate many non-Christian sources; nonetheless, this thesis does examine the U.S. military from an insider's perspective to see where inter-religious conflict exists (both past and present) and what might occur in the future.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The truth is, politics and morality are inseparable. And as morality's foundation is religion, religion and politics are necessarily related. We need religion as a guide. We need it because we are imperfect, and our government needs the church, because only those humble enough to admit they're sinners can bring to democracy the tolerance it requires in order to survive.

President Ronald Reagan August 23, 1984

### A. TODAY'S PULSE: POLITICS AND THE MEDIA

In an effort to understand the current religious and military environment within the United States (U.S.), we must first look at today's political climate. The American people just came off a Presidential Election where the "survey findings parallel exit poll results showing that moral values is a top-tier issue for voters," (The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004).

The 2004 Presidential Election results provided a re-election victory for George W. Bush. This time he won both the Electoral College and popular votes unlike during the 2000 election. After the election, pollsters were busy trying to determine the "deciding" factor for the victor. The 2004 exit polls indicate that "moral values" were the single most important issue. However, if you aggregate particular issues such as terrorism and Iraq, or economy and taxes, then the significance of moral values is mitigated; however, it remains an important issue and something to pay attention to in the future. This subject will invariably incite discussions between the two major political parties, the "conservative" Republicans and the "liberal" Democrats.

Steven Waldman, former national editor of *U.S. News & World Report*, is the co-founder of a multi-faith e-community website, Beliefnet Incorporated. In a 2004 article, Waldman presents his case about how liberals misunderstand religious conservatives, and vice versa. Waldman admits liberals are equally moral as conservatives; however, the central issue really is the source of absolute moral authority. This moral authority can come from numerous

philosophers, prophets or it can come from a single source. For most Christians the authority is Jesus Christ. How one cites this source creates the fuel for debate.

The Pew Research Center (PRC) survey corresponds to the exit poll results, showing that moral values are a crucial issue for voters and

[m]ore than four-in-ten...of those who chose moral values as the most important factor in their vote from the list of issues say the term relates to specific concerns over social issues, such as abortion and gay marriage. However, others did not cite specific policy issues, and instead pointed to factors like the candidates' personal qualities or made general allusions to religion and values. (PRC, 2004, p. 2).

Additionally, the survey shows that both parties were equally successful in reaching their respective voters.

Keith Fournier (2004) is a human rights lawyer and author of seven books; prior to the 2004 Presidential Election he wrote an article entitled, "God is not a Republican." In an effort to make himself clear, Fournier contends that "God is not a member of the Constitution Party, Libertarian Party, or any of a growing number of political 'alternatives' that reflect a growing dissatisfaction with both major political parties" (Fournier, 2004). Divine intervention does not create political parties, humans do. Everyone's faith is personal, but it can be "radically and fundamentally public" (Fournier, 2004). Faith is not something that you put on or take off, but encompasses whom you are.

The PRC study offers a partial deconstruction of the conservative and liberal ideologies within the Republican and Democratic parties concerning religion. This study reviews the past 15 years and shows how religion and religious faith correlate with strong partisan stances and ideological identification. The PRC (2003b) states that:

Republicans and Democrats were equally likely to express strong personal religious attitudes in 1987 and 1988; the same percentage in both parties affirmed the [three statements on faith:] importance of prayer, belief in Judgment Day and strong belief in God (71% in each). But over the past 15 years, Republicans have become

increasingly united in these beliefs, opening up a seven-point gap between the parties (78% vs. 71% of Democrats).

This growing divide is even more evident in looking at the relationship between political ideology and religious faith. While there has always been a correlation between conservatism and religiosity, the relationship has grown notably stronger in the past 15 years. Religious commitment has increased substantially among self-identified conservatives (81% agree with all three statements on faith and belief, compared with 73% in 1987-88). Liberals, on the other hand, have become somewhat less religiously oriented. Just over half of self-identified liberals (54%) agree with all three religious statements, down from 59% fifteen years ago.

This religious/political alignment can also be seen within religious denominations. In 1987 and 1988, white evangelical Protestants were split fairly evenly along partisan lines (34% Republicans, 31% Democrats). Today, there is a nearly two-to-one Republican advantage among white evangelicals (43%-22%). The partisanship of non-evangelical white Protestants and black Protestants, by comparison, has been relatively stable.

In addition, white Catholics, once strongly Democratic, are now much more politically divided. In the late 1980s, a significantly greater percentage of white Catholics identified themselves as Democrats than Republicans (41% vs. 24%). Today, partisan identification among white Catholics is divided almost evenly (31% Democrat, 29% Republican). And again, this shift is driven predominantly by more highly religious Catholics. Among white Catholics who attend Mass regularly an 18-point Democratic identification advantage in the late 1980s (42% Democrat, 24% Republican) has turned into a dead-heat today (30% Democrat, 32% Republican)... (pp. 67-68)

Studying human nature and behavior for over 70 years, the Gallup Organization conducts polls and carries one of the most respected names in survey research. Gallup's vast datasets include information on religious affiliations, attitudes, and behaviors in America. Frank Newport, editor in chief, in a report entitled "A Look at Americans and Religion Today," makes some conclusions in the wake of Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. Newport (2004) states, "[t]he fact that America is a predominantly Christian nation will not come as a great surprise to many observers, yet is a finding that is often lost in discussion of reasons why a movie about Jesus Christ might do so

well on American movie screens.” Gallup's 2003 report analysis shows that about 82% of American adults are Christians. In Chapter III of this thesis, we will discuss some classification problems; however, the main point here is that a vast majority of adults consider themselves Christian. This survey also portrays the religiosity of Americans and indicates more than 60% say that religion is very important, with another 24% saying that religion is fairly important, and the remaining 15% saying that religion is not very important. This indicates there has been no significant change over the years. Reinforcing this is the fact that over two-thirds of American adults report being members of a specific church.

The religion and social trends editor for Gallup, Albert L. Winseman (2005), looks at how people view religious influences within society. Most people say that religion is losing its influence, but firmly believe the power of religion can solve today's problems. The duality inherent in this contradiction implies frustration about religious influences, with hopefulness about religious solutions. Moral stagnation creates room for improvement and becomes a natural niche for religion. Having faith means having a better today as well as tomorrow. His summation looks at how this issue is not going to go away anytime soon, especially in the political realm. His emphasis is on the Republican Party where values equal morality and therefore religion remains a central issue in policy debates.

The Justice at the Gate (JatG) Organization compares the platforms of the two major parties prior to each presidential election. During each national convention, a representative gauges the public's reaction to the “party's vision, beliefs, and values, and its legislative plan and policy decisions on important issues of the day” (JatG, n.d.b). Issues of faith include abortion, prayer in school, homosexuality, and faith-based education. The JatG Organization produces a publication that captures the 124 year history of major civil rights efforts by the two parties from 1840-1964 (JatG, n.d.a).

The conservative media watchdog group known as the Media Research Center (MRC) is dedicated “to bringing a political balance to the news and

entertainment media” (Media Research Center, n.d.). The Pew Research Center (PRC) “is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues” and it confirms the MRC’s assessment of the unique relationship between liberal steadfastness and the media (PRC, n.d.). According to a PRC (2003a) report, the liberal image persists among the media. Also:

Public cynicism about press values and performance runs deeper than perceived inaccuracies. Most Americans (53%) believe that news organizations are politically biased, while just 29% say they are careful to remove bias from their reports. When it comes to describing the press, twice as many say news organizations are ‘liberal’ (51%) than ‘conservative’ (26%) while 14% say neither phrase applies. This was also the case in surveys conducted in the mid to late 1980s and, not surprisingly, there is a significant partisan cast to these perceptions.

Surveys traditionally reject conservative positions because journalists offer only liberal biased questions and do not utilize independent thinking that can mix liberal and conservative positions. The realization of this liberal bias has doubled since 1985 (22% to 45%) even with official recognition from the press (PRC, 2004)

National Broadcasting Corporation’s (NBC) *Meet the Press* host Tim Russert examined post-election results with Democratic strategist James Carville, and his wife, Mary Matalin, a Republican strategist. During the interview, Carville noted that the purpose for “a political party in a democracy is to win elections” (NBC News’ *Meet the Press*, 2004). Moreover, he recognized that his party is not doing well in that regard. He stated that “we [the Democratic Party] produce a litany...and the Republican [party produce a] narrative, a story... but I think this is a message to the Democratic Party: We need to produce a narrative. We need to be more about solving problems as opposed to managing them, and I think it's going to be interesting to see how it comes out” (NBC News’ *Meet the Press*, 2004). The definition of these words, ‘litany’ and ‘story,’ suggest an introspective approach to future Democratic strategies. Litany is “a prayer consisting of a series of invocations and supplications by the leader with

alternate responses by the congregation” whereas story is “an account or recital of an event or a series of events, either true or fictitious” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2004). Even a cursory consideration of the meaning of these words suggests that Carville’s political party already appreciates religion, but is still unable to sell its story to the voting public.

In the article, “Democrats avoid religion message for moral duty,” Tim Funk and Celeste Smith (2004) prophesize how the “Democrats have shied away from talk on the stump about their faith journeys.” They approach morality from a social perspective, not from their personal faith. Democratic politicians and the media tend to parallel each other in their liberal views, which create tension with conservatives when considering political issues through a moral lens. Demographically, Christianity is the predominant religion in America and in Chapter II we will look at the complexities in categorizing and defining this religion. It is even more difficult to define religion when we discuss American politics. When religion mixes with politics, it becomes difficult to define and understand terms like Republican/Democrat, right/left, and conservative/liberal. Moreover, there are no definitive definitions and many change over time. Yet, we typically understand that a conservative holds beliefs that are more traditional, and obsessively patriotic. While liberals are also patriotic, the weight of their beliefs lies in tolerance for everyone and everything. The discussion thus far has been limited to the two major political parties; when you go beyond these it gets even more complicated.

What makes a person ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative?’ We must first realize that there are hardcore democratic conservatives and republican liberals, even though the tendency is the opposite. It is difficult to come up with a particular voting pattern scheme for an identifiable group, but consideration should be given to the voters’ biases (habits, background, and birth). Or, from an alternative perspective, one might look at the candidates’ appeal (ideology, likeability, and stance). However, I would suggest that at the core of political ideology are beliefs, and thus religion. If liberals are more idealistic and conservatives more realistic, this might suggest that differences between their respective worldviews

are beginning to deepen and widen, and liberal tolerance versus conservative revelation may be the signal that the gap can no longer be bridged.

Hired by Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1949, Andy Rooney's popularity spiked as he joined CBS's *60 Minutes*, becoming "America's favorite curmudgeon" (Goldenberg, 2004). The "Andy Rooney segment" became a regular feature in September 1978; he is now a 27-year veteran and boasts three Writers Guild Awards, three Emmy Awards, and a Lifetime Achievement Emmy. He has written a national newspaper column for Tribune Media Services since 1979 and authored numerous magazine articles along with thirteen books. In November 2003, Walter Cronkite awarded Rooney the Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism and Mass Communication from Arizona State University, where he joins the ranks of former recipients: "Charles Kuralt, Bill Moyers, Ben Bradley [sic], Bob Woodward, George Will, Katharine Graham, Bernard Shaw, Cokie Roberts and the '60 Minutes' team" (Jennings, 2003). Arizona's Cronkite School "boasts one of the largest and most successful mass communication programs in the country, preparing undergraduates and graduate students for careers in journalism, media management and public relations" (Jennings, 2003). In 1941, before his media career Rooney was an Army draftee and one of six correspondents who flew over Germany on the first American bombing raid in 1943 (Jennings, 2003).

On November 18, 2004, Rooney made an appearance at the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Massachusetts. During his 15 minute speech, Rooney charmingly "attributed voters' reliance on religion in the recent election to ignorance" (Barry, 2004). He acknowledged his atheist beliefs and his incapacity to understand religion, he says, because he thinks it is a bunch of nonsense. Rooney continued by saying, "...Christian fundamentalism is a result of 'a lack of education. They haven't been exposed to what the world has to offer'" (Barry, 2004). Rooney went on to admit that Dan Rather's forgery scandal was instigated by a bloodthirsty "political agenda of CBS News staffers. 'There's no question they wanted to run it because it was negative towards Bush'...Rooney shares that [same] ideological hostility to Bush"

(Barry, 2004). Before we close with Rooney's faithlessness, let us look at someone who projects faithfulness.

David Aikman, a journalist and author, is a senior fellow at the Trinity Forum Academy and the author of a new book, *A Man Of Faith: The Spiritual Journey of George W. Bush*. Aikman (2004) assesses the significance of President Bush's relationships with President Putin and Prime Minister Blair; they all have a strong reliance on faith. White House aides compare Bush's evangelical demeanor to that of C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*. President Bush reads the Bible daily and engages in prayer periodically throughout the day. Aikman (2004) plainly states that Bush is "one of the godliest chief executives" to dwell in the Oval Office and goes on to make the historical note that:

There have been many very committed Christians in the White House in the 228 years of our nation's history. Some presidents, like Lincoln, appear to have come to faith under the enormous pressures of the office. Others, like Jefferson, were probably not Christians by belief--they may have been Unitarians, like Taft--but nevertheless held the conviction that the person who occupies the Oval Office should be not only a man of profoundly honorable personal ethics and preferably a person of deep personal faith, but also aware of this nation's unwritten covenant with the Almighty.

George W. Bush fits all three of Jefferson's requirements for the presidency. He also fits a fourth, that Jefferson did not allude to. He personally would never have been elected had not faith profoundly altered his character and prepared him morally for the task.

As we look back through American history, today's politics and media help shape how we view religious accommodation in the military. Religious convictions seem to be a significant part if not the backbone of the U.S. Constitution, along with religious accommodation. Moral guidance infuses both environments—that of the government and of the military—and appears to reflect the religion and the thoughts of the Founding Fathers.

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

As I began research for this thesis, I quickly came to realize how little material is available about this specific topic. As I contacted chaplains, professors, and fellow military service members about the potential for religious



conflict within the U.S. military, I got many interesting looks, which could be summed up in a comment such as: “that’s really interesting, but I don’t know how it plays out in the U.S. military.” There did not seem to be any specific sources that relate directly to U.S. military personnel and religious plurality within the military beyond the chaplaincy. There might be obvious reasons for the absence of this research, the first and most obvious being that the military is just a representative cross-section of American society. Alternatively, the number of minority religions may not pose a problem for the military. Or, it could be that minority religions have too few common features among them; except for the fact that they are non-conventional religious groups when compared to mainstream religious organizations. However, we will see that religious convictions and values in the military may not mirror those in American society. Implications for the Global War on Terrorism as well as future wars are profound. What, for instance, will the long-term effects of this war be on Islam and Christianity in the United States?

The Department of Defense (DoD) issues publications that govern religion and the chaplaincy within the military departments. These publications come out in the form of DoD directives and instructions. The Secretaries of all the military departments (Air Force, Army, and Navy, which includes the Marine Corps) are suppose to ensure adherence throughout their organizations, and may impose additional professional requirements. Military departments, under DoD, orient themselves to the personnel of their respective service. Reviewing these publications was necessary to understand how religious practices are accommodated and how the architectural framework of the chaplaincy works. Department of Defense publications support religion, religious accommodation/programs, and the chaplaincy. Typically, every publication has an effective date, which establishes new guidance and replaces old documents. The World Wide Web helps the military and its personnel verify the currency of their publications in garrison, and at remote and deployed locations. Referencing military publications that pre-date current publications can be useful in explaining trends, but can produce difficulties when trying to relate “official” policy since

today's guidance rests solely on publications that are current. For this reason, a historical view of military doctrine pertaining to religion or the chaplaincy becomes problematic; changes in guidance are only valid while the current publication is in use. This is not to say that the chaplaincy or religion has not played an important role throughout American military history, but it does suggest that doctrine, policies, directives, and instructions change over time. For the purposes of this thesis, we will only use current publications and have made a conscious effort to note where significant changes in policy may have occurred.<sup>1</sup>

Organizationally, the Secretary of Defense appoints the Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of Chaplains of the Departments of the Army, the Navy [including the Marine Corps], and the Air Force, who together constitute the Armed Forces Chaplain Board (AFCB). Functionally, the AFCB makes recommendations to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, through the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management Policy on “[r]eligious, ethical, and moral standards for all Military Services and policies for the protection of religious guarantees under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution” (DoD, 1995, p. 3). The AFCB responsibilities also include all facets of policy governing chaplains, facilities, civilian churches and clergy, and joint military endeavors.

I was able to interview the executive director of the AFCB, U.S. Army Chaplain (Colonel Richard K. Hum). This was an important step in constructing the basic framework for this thesis. Telephone correspondence and emails with the executive director for the AFCB have clarified DoD publications as well as specific issues involving minority religions. The executive director also collates the most accurate demographic data currently available to DoD; this information shows the religious preferences of all active-duty personnel in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Additionally, the AFCB tracks the denominational

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<sup>1</sup> Many military organizations use military publications that provide guidance in their operational workspace and the chaplaincy is no different from most military units. However, under unique circumstances the military occasionally contracts publications out to the civil sector when they cannot effectively perform this function themselves. When available, this thesis gives preferential treatment to “in-house” governmental and military publications due to their authoritative nature.

affiliations of all active-duty chaplains. Unfortunately, this data is “For Official Use Only” and cannot be used as part of this thesis.

Outside of the DoD, there are few publications that delve into religion, religious accommodation, and the chaplaincy within the U.S. military. However, there have been recent media reports about religious turmoil within the U.S. military. This thesis examines some of these events to illustrate how our military organization looks at policy and applies it to a rather large operational organization.

Chaplain Don Malin has been in the U.S. Army Reserves since the late 1980s. An interview with him about his recent deployment to the Middle East brought forth several key discussion points for this thesis. Malin also serves as the director of the Mississippi office of the Watchman Fellowship Organization where he is recognized as an expert spokesperson on cults. Don hosts a weekly radio program discussing counter-cult apologetics, which means to ‘defend one’s position’ (Pfeiffer, Vos, & Rea, 1998).

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Brenson Bishop is a 24-year Army veteran. His active-duty career began when he was a tank platoon leader in 1981; other duties included executive officer and company commander. After command he deployed to Operation Desert Storm until 1992 when he left the military for seminary training and completed a Master of Divinity degree from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Ordination followed in 1995, with Bishop’s Chaplain Corps commissioning in 1996. He continues to serve as a Brigade Chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserves as well as a clinical staff chaplain at the Veterans Medical Center in Kentucky with chaplain coverage in the Hospice, Psychology, and Intensive Care. In December 2003, he served in Operation Iraqi Freedom at Camp Liberty in Baghdad, Iraq with responsibility for five Unit Ministry Teams providing religious support for over 3200 U.S. Army and Air Force personnel. On special assignment, he later went to Baghdad, Iraq to provide crisis and trauma pastoral care and was a member of the Critical Incident Team for a Mass Casualty attack in Mosul, Iraq in December 2004.

The Command Chaplain for Naval Postgraduate School is Chaplain (Captain) George Clifford, U.S. Navy; he has been instrumental in helping structure the moral and ethical framework of this thesis. Moral and ethical dilemmas are a significant part of everyday life and as religious convictions blend with political and military service they tend to influence organizational layers differently at each level. Over the last decade, many religious issues have been dealt with in the courtroom and by the media. At times it has been difficult to balance governing directives with an ethical approach at the unit level. The case studies we review will highlight current conflicts fraught with religious symbolism.

### **C. OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS**

Analyzing religious accommodation in the military from top to bottom is one of the primary objectives of this thesis. The thesis is divided into three parts. First, under the heading “Government and Religion: The Great Experiment,” I seek to establish that religious convictions have always been part of the American heritage. From America’s religious past through its impact on today’s military, we will look at some potential organizational concerns. Next, we will examine how the chaplains balance their dual roles of officer and clergy as they accommodate all religions.

The second part of the thesis examines certain aspects of several religions more closely and as we continue to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism. Incidentally, the 2003 Military Times Poll (2004) reveals that the U.S. military is more conservative, Republican, and considers itself morally superior to the nation it serves. The poll goes on to explain that about 53% describe their political views as *conservative or very conservative*, 39% call themselves *moderate*, and 7% call themselves *liberal or very liberal*. Political party affiliation among the collective military includes Republicans at 57%, Democrats at 13% and Independents at 18% (11% declining to answer). However, if you only look at who is Republican that number jumps to 66% within the officer corps and drops to 49% for enlisted troops. Sixty-six percent of military members think they have a higher moral standard than the nation that they serve and consider 62% of the country to have fair or poor moral standards. These service members feel that

the act of service, by itself, demonstrates they have a higher moral quality than civilians, largely due to military culture lauding honor and morality.

Finally, the thesis concludes with an attempt to determine how the personal religious beliefs of military members may influence their responses to military policies. If tension does occur between military service members and religious policies, can mitigation of future events or issues be averted? Like many terms, 'conflict' suggests a wide variety of meanings, to include 'fight,' 'battle,' and 'war.' Nevertheless, it can also mean "competitive or opposing action of incompatibles...antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)... mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2004). The term 'conflict,' in this thesis, will refer to everything from significant tension to all-out war. Two other words, 'religion' and 'religious,' are difficult to define because there are so many potential interpretations and meanings. Among the many traditional definitions, some refer to heaven, hell, resurrection, judgment, etc. Some definitions are so broad that they include beliefs that most people do not even regard as religious, involving cosmology and ecology for instance. Finding articles, books, or papers on religion and spirituality is quite easy; however, narrowing down a definition for discussion purposes is quite difficult. For instance,

The English word 'religion' raises certain problems. There are diverse opinions concerning its root and origin. Cicero connected it with *religare*, 'to read again,' 'to consider,' 'give attention to the divine.' Lactantius and Augustine translated *religare* 'to bind back,' and saw the idea of obligation in the word. The New Testament *thrēskeia*, speaks merely of religious worship, particularly in its external form.

In philosophy and in common use the word has been used with a variety of meanings. Schleiermacher defines it as 'the feeling of absolute dependence,' [Immanuel] Kant as 'the observance of the moral law as a divine institution.' In general, a religion may be said to be any system of faith and worship of God.

The classic passage on religion in the New Testament is James 1:26-27. Here the terms used (*thrēskos* and *thrēskeia*) definitely

refer to outward expression. The contrast is drawn between one whose religion consists of formal ceremonies that have no support in heart devotion, and the one whose religion consists of deeds of mercy, because it flows from the right heart attitude to God. (Pfeiffer et al., 1998)

Jone Johnson Lewis (2003), president of the National Leaders Council, suggests in the article, "Ethical Culture as Religion," that:

Religion is that set of beliefs and/or institutions, behaviors and emotions which binds human beings to something beyond their individual selves and fosters in its adherents a sense of humility and gratitude that, in turn, sets the tone of one's world-view and requires certain behavioral dispositions relative to that which transcends personal interests. In other words, religion connects a person with a larger world and creates a loyalty that extends to the past, the present and the future. This loyalty not only makes demands upon the person but -- and this is the part that makes it distinctively spiritual -- it creates a sense of humility. So religion provides a story about one's place in the larger scheme of things, creates a sense of connection and it makes one feel grateful.

On the other hand, the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, or OCRT, (2004) offer this as a definition:

'Religion is any specific system of belief about deity, often involving rituals, a code of ethics, a philosophy of life, and a worldview.' Thus we would consider Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Native American Spirituality, and Neo-paganism to be religions. We also include Agnosticism, Atheism, Humanism, Ethical Culture etc. as religions, because they also contain a 'belief about deity' -- their belief is that they do not know whether a deity exists, or they have no knowledge of God, or they sincerely believe that God does not exist.

Many conservative Christians, Native Americans, Agnostics, Atheists, and New Age Movements try to distance themselves from this term because it tends to cover all faiths and detract from the essence of each faith. Christians consider Christianity to be an intimate personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Native Americans consider their spiritual beliefs and practices to be an integral and seamless part of their surroundings. Agnostics and Atheists have a single belief about the existence or non-existence of a supreme being and do not necessarily ascribe to any particular code of ethics, while New Age Movements base their

diverse beliefs and practices on individual thought or small groups. Many times New Age Movements graft their beliefs and practices onto existing religions or establishments.

A spiritual person is a seeker of spiritual knowledge as it relates to God, the human soul, and the meaning of life. A spiritual person typically uses a set of beliefs to seek this knowledge, but these beliefs can change over time as they gain a better understanding of religious doctrine. For purposes of this thesis, spirituality is a key factor in understanding one's religion.

Historically, the use of the term 'sect' describes a group that engages in teachings regarded to be heretical. The background of this word comes from within Christianity, but can be applied to any subdivision of a larger religious group. The term, 'denomination' refers to one among "a large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name and organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy" (Mayer, 1999).

The word 'pagan' has no precise definition across religions. Typically the term describes someone who is not Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, but since there are many other religions, this quickly becomes useless. WordNet (2003) describes a pagan as a hedonist, which means "someone motivated by desires for sensual pleasures." The use of the prefix, 'Neo' is often a descriptor for a contemporary, or newer, form of practices. Neo-pagans follow a religion of reconstruction that has taken on a new form of the ancient Pagans. Neo-pagan traditions do not recognize a Manichean deity similar to the Judeo-Christian and Islamic Satan. Neo-pagans respect other religions and the right of people to follow the faith of their choice (OCRT, 2005). This thesis uses pagan and neo-pagan interchangeably based on various cited references (Neo-Pagan, neo-Pagan, neo-pagan, Neopagan, neopagan, etc). Wiccans and other Neo-pagans sometimes use Pagan as a synonym for Neo-pagan.

In closing Chapter I, it is worth noting that this thesis attempts to address religion and religious issues as they affect the U.S. military. An effort was made to not restrict this thesis specifically to Islam and the War on Terror(ism) even

though a topic of this sort seems apropos. Rather, my assumption has been that the U.S. military will act toward Islam as it does toward any other religion in its midst.



## **II. GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, AND RELIGION: THE GREAT EXPERIMENT**

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports...And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

President George Washington's Farewell Address 1796

### **A. PRELUDE TO AMERICA'S FOUNDING**

One of the most hotly debated questions about the birth of America is whether America bases itself on Christian principles. Arguments on both sides tend to stir up plenty of controversy. In this day and age, many search to find the answers for themselves. It becomes apparent that one must make every effort to use primary source documentation, because secondary source documents take on the coloration of the author.

The Library of Congress (LOC) is the "nation's oldest federal cultural institution" and the "research arm of Congress" (LOC, n.d.a). The Library of Congress can thus draw from its own archive of primary documentation and from those who study primary source documentation. The Library of Congress on-line exhibit, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*, includes a vast collection of "early American books, manuscripts, letters, prints, paintings, artifacts, and music from the Library's collections and complemented by loans from other institutions..." (LOC, 1998). It "explores the role religion played in the founding of the American colonies, in the shaping of early American life and politics, and in forming the American Republic" (LOC, 1998).

Due to the religious persecutions of the seventeenth century, Europeans who held deep and passionate religious beliefs fled to British North America; these colonial settlers helped establish what was to become the United States of America. In setting the stage, the Library of Congress (1998) exhibit explains that

the “New England colonies, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland were conceived and established ‘as plantations of religion’” whereas others came for secular reasons. Regardless, the “great majority left Europe to worship God in the way they believed to be correct” (LOC, 1998).

In 1607, the first colonial settlement of Virginia brought the Church of England to the American continent and it

owes most of its present strength and efficiency to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [an organization that nurtures religion and brings heathens to the truth]. It was this Society that sustained the infant American Church with almost unprecedented liberality for nearly a century, and the American nation is now reaping the fruits of what others have sown... (Lee, 1880).

On September 16, 1620, the Plymouth Pilgrims departed Europe to establish the first “New England” colony. The Plymouth Compact set forth the guiding rules of government for many years and became the official Constitution of the Plymouth Colony. Before setting foot in America, all 41 adult males (out of the 102 total passengers) signed the Compact on November 21, 1620, which states:

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid: And by Virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general Good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due Submission and Obedience. IN WITNESS whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape-Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth, Anno Domini; 1620. (Thorpe, 1906)

Additional settlements also brought religion with them to America. Congregationalism was established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during 1629-1630. In 1634, the South Colony founded Maryland, which introduced the Roman Catholic Church to America. In 1636, Roger Williams left Massachusetts for Rhode Island in order to seek support for religious dissidents. In 1654, fleeing religious persecutions in Brazil, Jews came to New York. From 1659-1662, Quaker hangings occurred in Massachusetts and persecutions took place in Virginia, as various settlements attempted to enforce religious uniformity. In 1681, William Penn led the Quakers as they received a charter that established religious liberty throughout Pennsylvania. In 1683, sects of German Protestants, favoring religious liberty, began to arrive in Pennsylvania. In 1689, the English Parliament passed the Toleration Act, which improved conditions of dissenters throughout the American colonies (LOC, 1998).

In the Eighteenth century, settlements began to experience a new era of religious energy: one third of the colonies were recognizing a phenomenal period of growth due to the same passionate commitment experienced by the first colonial settlers. This led to an increase in church attendance with churches “being built at a headlong pace” (LOC, 1998). The 1700-1740 figures for church attendance in the colonies estimates around 75 to 80 percent of the population (LOC, 1998). With the Great Awakening (1730s-1740s), the first of many revivals that spread throughout the English-speaking American colonies, evangelical events were meant to invigorate, but often polarized the church. The British North American colonies “enthusiastically supported the efforts of their leaders to create ‘a city on a hill’ or a ‘holy experiment,’ whose success would prove that God’s plan for his churches could be successfully realized in the American wilderness” (LOC, 1998).

Religion was a part of the American Revolution. The clergy themselves also began serving as “military chaplains, as penmen for committees of correspondence, and as members of state legislatures, constitutional conventions and the national Congress. Some even took up arms, leading Continental troops in battle” (LOC, 1998).

As we end this section, I quote the great French commentator, Alexis de Tocqueville (1839) who captures religious life in America during a trip when he talks about religion:

...almost all the sects of the United States are comprised within the great unity of Christianity, and Christian morality is everywhere the same...Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must nevertheless be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country...Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all the Americans have a sincere faith in their religion, for who can search the human heart? but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation, and to every rank of society. (pp. 231-233)

## **B. THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**

On December 15, 1791, the Bill of Rights became part of the United States Constitution. This was only four years after the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of Philadelphia signed the Constitution and only three years after the Constitution became the Law of the Land. The Bill of Rights gives us the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. An amendment is a change or addition to the Constitution. Why did our Constitution need ten amendments so soon after its adoption? Founders, like Patrick Henry, felt there were not enough freedoms and rights mentioned in our Constitution. Others, like James Madison, felt the Constitution protected the people's rights even though they were not mentioned. The compromise between the two groups is known as the Bill of Right—for over 200 years this has ensured individuals' freedoms.

The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" (House of Representatives, 2000). The fundamental nature of the First Amendment prohibits Congress from establishing or restricting the free exercise of religion. The main purpose was to leave matters

of religion to the *states* while retaining the protection of individuals' freedom of speech, press, and assembly.

Ironically, President Thomas Jefferson's most famous phrase regarding the "wall of separation between Church and State," does not exist anywhere in the Constitution, but people will normally attribute it directly to the First Amendment containing the Bill of Rights. This amendment ensures "that no national denomination would be established by congress, it never intended to suppress religious expression" (The Puritan Press, 2003).

President Thomas Jefferson might be astonished to find that the phrase he coined when speaking to the Danbury Baptists would have such long-lasting effects. Jefferson's quote is to be found in a written response to the Danbury Baptist Association about the establishment of a national religion (Jefferson, 1802). The Puritan Press (2003) suggests that

[t]he current cultural debate regarding the idea of separation of church and state is often fueled by sound bites and misunderstanding of the actual document that gave birth to the phrase. We the people seem to have redefined or even invented a new law that suits our needs while throwing original intent by the wayside.

On January 6, 1821, Thomas Jefferson, at the age of 77, began sketching an autobiography which only briefly touches on his childhood and family ancestry. His writing helps give us a glimpse into American history from Jefferson's perspective. Jefferson never completed this writing endeavor, but the autobiography does cover his life from 1743 to 1790. Jefferson's discussion includes some of the deliberations on the wording for the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution.

The bill for establishing religious freedom, the principles of which had, to a certain degree, been enacted before, I had drawn in all the latitude of reason & right. It still met with opposition; but, with some mutilations in the preamble, it was finally passed; and a singular proposition proved that it's protection of opinion was meant to be universal. Where the preamble declares that coercion is a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, an amendment was proposed, by inserting the word "Jesus Christ," so

that it should read "a departure from the plan of Jesus Christ, the holy author of our religion." The insertion was rejected by a great majority, in proof that they meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan [Mohammedanism], the Hindoo [Hindu], and infidel of every denomination.

I think the original intent of government was not to separate the government from the church; it was to keep the government out of church matters. The writers of the constitution did not intend to help separate religion from its impact on secular implications of ethical and moral values. Samuel P. Huntington (2004) articulates this well when he states,

Some people cite the absence of religious language in the Constitution and the provisions of the First Amendment as evidence that America is fundamentally a secular country. Nothing could be further from the truth. At the end of the eighteenth century, religious establishments existed throughout European countries and in several American states. State control of the church was a key element of state power, and the established church, in turn, provided legitimacy to the state. The framers of the American Constitution prohibited an established national church in order to limit the power of government and to protect and strengthen religion...It was spectacularly successful. (pp. 84-85)

Furthermore, Daniel Dreisbach (1997) notes that the "U. S. Constitution's lack of a Christian designation had little to do with a radical secular agenda. Indeed, it had little to do with religion at all. The Constitution was silent on the subject of God and religion because there was a consensus that, despite the framer's personal beliefs, religion was a matter best left to the individual citizens and their respective state governments (and most states in the founding era retained some form of religious establishment). The Constitution, in short, can be fairly characterized as 'godless' or secular only insofar as it deferred to the states on all matters regarding religion and devotion to God."

According to Gary DeMar (2005), "the national Constitution did not nullify the religious pronouncements of the state constitutions, and neither did it separate religion from civil government. The First Amendment is a direct prohibition on Congress, not the states, to stay out of religious issues...This is a

good indication that the states were to be unmolested on their religious requirements...even today every state constitution makes reference to God” (emphasis added).

### **C. GOVERNMENTAL AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

Well, Doctor, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy? “A republic, if you can keep it.”

Benjamin Franklin’s response, Date: Unknown

In 1790, the size of the U.S. government under George Washington’s leadership was approximately 1000 people; currently, that number is now around 3 million people. As the U.S. government strives for efficiency and effectiveness, it commonly struggles with inefficient and ineffective operations. Most folks are excessively familiar with the term “red tape” when they look at government bureaucracies. Unfortunately, these bureaucracies are difficult to reform because the federal bureaucracy is enormous and complex, not forgetting that the budgetary size of government spending for fiscal year 2003 was \$2.1 trillion. (Volkomer, 2004). In *Politics and the Media*, Walter Volkomer (2004) states, “Media can affect executive officials in that they influence public opinion, reflect public opinion, investigate corruption, and expose wrongdoing in the bureaucracy. Private groups can oppose bureaucratic action. The competition for federal funds and influence limits bureaucratic power. Finally, the values of the bureaucrats serve as a check on corruption.”

Anthony H. Cordesman is the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and is a military analyst for ABC News. Cordesman offers another perspective on democracy and the republic. Cordesman’s book, *The War after the War: Strategic Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan*, insightfully discusses how the U.S. should:

look beyond the word “democracy” and remember that it is not [a] democracy but instead a republic, with three branches of government, a bill of rights, and certain limits on majority rule. It has a government that protects the individual over the majority and

preserves the rights of all through the constitutional and legal limitations on the power of the federal government and checks and balances within government. It is a revolution, not evolution, that brings violence and hostility to the United States. It is evolution that the United States should encourage. (Cordesman, 2004, p.68)

The Columbia Encyclopedia (2000) states that the U.S. government, or federal government, is:

A union of states in which sovereignty is divided between a central authority and component state authorities. A federation differs from a confederation in that the central power acts directly upon individuals as well as upon states, thus creating the problem of dual allegiance. Substantial power over matters affecting the people as a whole, such as external affairs, commerce, coinage, and the maintenance of military forces, are usually granted to the central government. Nevertheless, retention of jurisdiction over local affairs by states is compatible with the federal system and makes allowance for local feelings. The chief political problem of a federal system of government is likely to be the allocation of sovereignty, because the need for unity among the federating states may conflict with their desire for autonomy...The primacy of the central over the state governments was not resolved in the United States until after the Civil War. The distribution of powers between the federal and state governments is usually accomplished by means of a written constitution, for a federation does not exist if authority can be allocated by ordinary legislation. A fairly uniform legal system, as well as cultural and geographic affinities, is usually necessary for the success of a federation.

Max Weber's interests begin with understanding contemporary society, but from this he focuses on the organizations of society, broadening his interest into the increasing bureaucratization of the social order. Weber's evaluation saw society moving towards an increase in rationalization and structure. As Weber explains,

Bureaucracy can be considered to be a particular case of rationalization, or rationalization applied to human organization. Bureaucratic coordination of human action, Weber believed, is the distinctive mark of modern social structures. In order to study these organizations, both historically and in contemporary society, Weber developed the characteristics of an ideal-type bureaucracy: hierarchy of authority, impersonality, written rules of conduct,



promotion based on achievement, specialized division of labor, and efficiency.

According to Weber, bureaucracies are goal-oriented organizations designed according to rational principles in order to efficiently attain their goals. Offices are ranked in a hierarchical order, with information flowing up the chain of command, directives flowing down. Operations of the organizations are characterized by impersonal rules that explicitly state duties, responsibilities, standardized procedures and conduct of office holders. Offices are highly specialized. Appointments to these offices are made according to specialized qualifications rather than ascribed criteria. All of these ideal characteristics have one goal, to promote the efficient attainment of the organization's goals.

Some have seriously misinterpreted Weber and have claimed that he liked bureaucracy, that he believed that bureaucracy was an 'ideal' organization. Others have pronounced Weber 'wrong' because bureaucracies do not live up to his list of 'ideals.' Others have even claimed that Weber "invented" bureaucratic organization. But Weber described bureaucracy as an 'ideal type' in order to more accurately describe their growth in power and scope in the modern world. His studies of bureaucracy still form the core of organizational sociology.

The bureaucratic coordination of the action of large numbers of people has become the dominant structural feature of modern societies. It is only through this organizational device that large-scale planning and coordination, both for the modern state and the modern economy, become possible. The consequences of the growth in the power and scope of these organizations is key in understanding our world. (Elwell, Frank, 1996)

Samuel Huntington's (1981) book, *American Politics: the Promise of Disharmony*, looks at the potential for conflict within the U.S. government and gives us an in-depth look at the gap between political ideals and political reality. This political gap is rooted in values and beliefs since politics reflects the natural tendencies of American society. The Declaration of Independence embraces liberty and equality as essentials. Man does not invent the law—he discovers it, through the Constitution that outlines the norms for human behavior. Protestantism contributed morality and individualism to the mix. The Enlightenment gave Americans natural rights, liberty, and the ability to see the

need for limited government: creation of all men is equal, so they must be equal in politics. Conflict erupts when one of these ideals is taken to the extreme. The Founding Fathers advanced the argument that all men are inherently evil. They structured government in an effort to lessen the power of any one man. Over time, Americans began to accept man as inherently good, reasoning that government must be kept weak and uncontrollable.

Samuel P. Huntington (2004) suggests two components that describe America's belief in national identity. The first is the American Creed, comprised of our belief in liberty, equity, law, and individual rights that originate from a political act not an identity. The source of this creed is America's Anglo-Protestant culture, which includes "the English language; Christianity; religious commitment; English concepts of the rule of law, the responsibility of rulers, and the rights of individuals; and dissenting Protestant values of individualism, the work ethic, and the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create heaven on earth, a 'city on the hill'" (p. xvi). The second is how Americans define themselves—"by their history, traditions, culture, heroes and villains, victories and defeats, enshrined in their 'mystic chords of memory' [preserved in their mystic knowledge of divine things]" (Huntington & Wolfe, 2004). Given that Huntington (1981) describes the core values of American life as the "American creed," which centers on liberty and equality, he argues that periods of "creedal passion" produce political reform movements. Moreover, these political eras follow religious "awakenings" by about two decades. In each successive creedal era, the emphasis on individual liberty and choice becomes more resonant.

The United States of America is a religiously pluralistic society in that it contains 17 major religions comprising over 4,500 denominations, of which Christianity alone claims 635 (Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2004). Religion News Service (2001) reports that Christianity is the world's largest religion with approximately 1.9 billion of the world's population. The report describes "Christianity as the 'most extensive and universal religion in history,' pointing out that Christians constituted the largest religious group worldwide at both the start and end of the 20th

century.” Within the U.S., Christianity is also the largest religion with approximately 239,000,000 adherents or 84% of the population.

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary offers detailed information and analysis about global Christian movements from resources such as the World Christian Database (WCD). The Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (2004) breaks Christianity into six megablocs that describe the “ecclesiastico-cultural subdivisions of affiliated Christians and their churches.” They are:

- Anglicans: Anglicans are Christians related to the Anglican Communion, tracing their origin back to the ancient British (Celtic) and English churches; including Anglican dissidents or schismatics in the Western world.
- Catholics: Affiliated Roman Catholics are defined in this Encyclopedia as baptized Roman Catholics plus catechumens.
- Orthodox: This includes Orthodoxy's 4 traditions: Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox.
- Protestants: This is composed of a group of independent denominations, sects, and independent churches. They trace their history back to the Reformation which was triggered when Martin Luther circulated 95 theses in which he listed what he considered to be faults in the Roman Catholic Church—both theological and in its policies.
- Independents: These are Christians independent of historic, organized, institutionalized, or denominationalist Christianity.
- Marginals: These are followers of para-Christian or quasi-Christian Western movements or deviations out of mainline Christianity (including pseudo-Christian ‘New Age’ cults), not professing mainstream Christian christocentric doctrine but claiming a second or supplementary or ongoing source of divine revelation in addition to the Bible (a new Book, angels, visions), but nevertheless centered on Jesus, Christ, the Cross, and other Christian features.

Another grouping that is not included in the megabloc, but worth mentioning are the unaffiliated Christians. They profess allegiance and commitment to Christ, but have no church affiliation. (Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2004)

Some institutional structures of religion and churches such as the Roman Catholics or the Mormons are fairly integrated and hierarchical. Other groups, such as the Baptists or the Presbyterians, have much looser institutional structures, although there is still some level of formal membership in a national conference. In some cases, religious organizations can have bureaucracies; however, most religions or denominations will never grow to the size of a military bureaucracy.

Many independent churches have no denominational or ecclesiastical headquarters; each church is autonomous. Independent churches form networks that will include a minister, pastor, or preacher as an administrator and operate with a relatively small staff. Many religions operate day to day supported by only small groups.

As long as a religious organization can maintain its body, which is the congregation or its members, it can remain successful. Organized religions can have a deep or shallow vertical hierarchy; however, many of the faster growing religions or organizations have a shallow hierarchy, which means that there are very few ties or no ties beyond its membership. Yet, they can have tremendous power as they mobilize members and use networking as a main tool of organization.

### **1. Religious Plurality and Morality**

Charles C. Haynes, senior scholar at the First Amendment Center, directs the center's First Amendment educational program in schools, and addresses issues concerning religious liberty in American public life. During a Public Broadcasting System (PBS) show (2000), Haynes noted that "[t]he explosion of religious pluralism in the United States has also contributed to our 'redefinition' of religion and made study of religion more important for citizenship in a diverse society."

Since the U.S. military is not immune to American societal controversies, it will have to deal with the proliferation of religious groups. As Jean-François Mayer (1999) notes: 'In North America, between three and ten million people are

involved in 700 to 3,000 cults [...].'; by comparison there are 500 cults in Great Britain totaling over a 500,000 members. The challenge becomes the ability to "...distinguish the minority of dangerous cults from the huge number of harmless ones, and take the necessary action without encroaching on every person's right to religious freedom" (Mayer, 1999). "The religious landscape itself has become much more diverse" and it is unlikely that the trend will reverse itself (Mayer, 1999). This means that society is already getting a glimpse of what the future may hold. Within the U.S. military "there are not only 'Christian dissenters' of various persuasions," but also a religious orientation that has no Christian roots (Mayer, 1999).

The U.S. military is a religiously pluralistic entity within itself because there are approximately "700 different religions and beliefs in the U.S. military attended to by the military Chaplains" (U.S. Department of State, 1999) and "the composition of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board has grown beyond 245 recognized groups [denominations or faith groups] in 1998" (Mayer, 1999). As such, the U.S. military reflects the pluralism and positive character and values of the United States.

Government, military, and religious bureaucracies are powerful institutions. Spirituality within an organized religion or religious group can help bolster and intensify these already powerful institutions, making them even stronger. As the U.S. military balances accommodation for all religions among its services, friction is likely to intensify and expose potential flashpoints. These flashpoints reflect the diversity of religions in the U.S. given the fact that the military represents a demographic slice of its citizenry. Within the framework of the military hierarchy, personnel may find it difficult to react, according to civil society's druthers/preferences.

#### **D. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, MILITARY DEPARTMENTS**

The Department of Defense (DoD) is a large organization with several million active duty, Reserve, Guard, civilian, and contractor personnel working at various locations throughout the world. The overall goal for many organizations can be found in DoD's mission statement—to "provide the military forces needed

to deter war and to protect the security of our country” (Defense Almanac, 2004).

Organizationally, DoD is:

a Cabinet-level Organization. Reporting to it are the three military departments (Army, Navy and Air Force) and 16 defense agencies. The four armed services are subordinate to their military departments. The Marine Corps is a second armed service in the Department of the Navy. The military departments are responsible for recruiting, training and equipping their forces, but operational control of those forces is assigned to one of the unified combatant commands. (Defense Almanac, 2004)

According to Richard Daft (2003), “when the spans of control are narrow, the hierarchy tends to be tall. When spans of control are wide, the hierarchy of authority will be shorter.” In the case of DoD, the spans of control are both narrow and wide. This large structure uses rigid and complex procedures that impede effective action with relatively few innovative ideas ever affecting the overall structure.

The *Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress*, addresses religion, religious ministries, and the chaplaincy. This report fulfills the annual requirements of Title 10 of the United States Code.

Chaplains serve as a visible reminder of the holy. They provide for the free exercise of religion for all service members and their families. This includes offering worship opportunities, pastoral care and counseling, religious education, ministry of presence, and emergency and sacramental ministrations, both in accordance with their respective ecclesiastical endorsements and in accommodation of the religious rights and needs of all service members. Chaplains are the primary advisors to the military commander in the areas of religion, religious accommodation, and moral/ethical issues, and also assist in morale and quality of life matters. Essential to the life and work of military communities, the chaplaincy works in close coordination with family support, medical, and quality of life programs. The chaplaincy is an embedded and integral part of the operational structure and participates fully in global deployments and commitments. (Cohen, 2000)

Military chaplains of both the active and reserve components minister and serve in a mobile and global environment, wherever United States Forces serve. Chaplains provide religious ministry responsive to the needs of service members, families and other

authorized personnel at home station or deployed including joint and multi-national task forces. Chaplains from active and reserve components coordinate in joint and multi-national task forces for worship opportunities, sacramental ministrations, pastoral care, religious education and advise the commander on the impact of religion on operations. Chaplains have fielded self-contained mobile (containerized) chapels, highly diverse religious literature, faith rations, and special holy day observance resource packets. Chaplains participate in pre-deployment briefings for service members and their families to prepare them for the separation and its unique and stressful challenges. Redeployment briefings by chaplains and reunion retreats provide continuous support to service members and families throughout the process of serving in U.S. global security commitments. Chaplains provide a spiritual dimension to family support, Critical Event Stress Debriefings, medical and quality of life programs. The chaplaincy continues to be an integral part of the military operational structure and participates fully in global commitments. (Cohen, 2001)

The 2001 report is the most recent one that mention religious ministries from a quality of life or U.S. service member's perspective. When it was issued, President Clinton was in office and William Cohen was the Secretary of Defense.

### **1. Religious Accommodation**

DoD Directive 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military* was initially released on February 3, 1988. Minimal changes were made to the original publication before recertification on November 21, 2003. This directive supports the fundamental basis of this thesis, so it has to be considered a cornerstone publication. The policy set forth in this publication is:

A basic principle of our nation is free exercise of religion. The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Armed Forces to observe the tenets of their respective religions. It is DoD policy that requests for accommodation of religious practices should be approved by commanders when accommodation will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, or discipline (DoDD 1300.17, 1988).

Military departments establish goals under each command while using discretion in an effort to help guide the accommodation of religious practices. The key word is *accommodation*. Goals include worship services and observances, food or

rations, immunizations or medical treatment, relevant religious materials (for command leadership, judge advocate, chaplain, etc.), DoD policy on religious practices and military requirements for personnel, and the wearing of religious items.

Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court acknowledge that the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) is the basis for justice within the military. By design, the military justice system allows operation in a society apart from civilian society whose roots stem from the Constitution. The military departments require discipline “because a military organization without discipline is nothing more than a disorganized rabble” (Schrader, 1975). Government and religion have an obvious place within the United States military under governmental support. Because there is freedom of religion the military must support religious accommodation of all faiths.

## **2. Armed Forces Chaplain Board**

The Armed Forces Chaplain Board (AFCB) is the highest governing level for the Chaplaincies within DoD under the Secretary of Defense. The AFCB policies traditionally come out in the form of DoD directives and instructions. These publications produce policy and provide an over-arching direction for each of the military departments. The AFCB provides liaisons to support the joint publications (Joint Pub 1-05), *Religious Ministry Support for Joint Operations*. The AFCB (n.d.) mission and functions are as follows:

### **MISSION**

- Provide for collaborative ministries to the Armed Forces
- Advise leaders of the military, military chaplaincies, ecclesiastical endorsing organizations, and federal agencies in matters of policy, guidance, information, and resources for ensuring the free exercise of religion for the Department of Defense

### **FUNCTIONS**

- Advise Secretary of Defense on matters of religion, ethics, morals, and morale.



- Advise Secretary of Defense on matters concerning plans, policies, and doctrine which affect the religious, ethical, and moral well-being of assigned personnel.
- Develop religious plans and programs to maintain readiness and assist in executing the delivery of religious ministries.
- Determine training required for chaplains in the Joint arena.
- Provide for the freedom to exercise religious beliefs for all DoD personnel.
- Develop plans, policies, and doctrine to ensure the delivery of religious ministry across a full spectrum of missions.
- Coordinate component religious support, as well as allied and host national religious resources.
- Develop policies governing professional standards, requirements, training, and assignment of military and auxiliary chaplains.
- Establish policies governing procurement and utilization of supplies, equipment, and facilities for religious use.
- Promote and maintain harmonious relationships with civilian clergy and distinctive faith groups.

The AFCB regularly supplies the military Chaplain Services with a list of recognized ecclesiastical endorsing agencies. Using this list, the chaplain recruitment/accession process helps evaluate chaplain candidates who have met the appropriate criteria through their respective ecclesiastical endorser.

### **3. Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent (EEA)**

There are many ecclesiastical endorsing agents, but the oldest is the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), which began operations as a private organization in 1982 and has roots that go back to 1901. This is when the War Department (predecessor to the Department of Defense) made the decision to require ecclesiastical endorsement for clergy who serve as chaplains in the armed forces. This organization brings together official representatives of all the major faith communities in the United States. The endorsers are the points of contact between the armed forces and over 220 religious denominations and faith groups. The EEA's have common goals with the military when it comes to recruitment, endorsement, and oversight of clergy members who desire to serve as chaplains. The endorsing agents look toward

clergy members who are “credible, committed to their faith, open to all persons, able to meet all military standards, and who represent the highest standards of their own faith communities” (NCMAF, n.d.). This unique organization provides official representation for all major faiths in the U.S. military because they speak with a single voice. According to Jack Williamson (personal communication, March 23, 2005), NCMAF is an association of denomination and faith group representatives who endorse civilian clergy for military and VA chaplaincy. Any religious group who meets the DoD or Veterans Affairs requirements to become an Endorsing Agency is welcome, but not required to join NCMAF.

#### **4. Chaplaincy: Origins and Present-day**

Origins of the U.S. chaplaincy go back to our Continental beginnings. From the founding of Jamestown, in 1607, to Independence in 1776, there was continual conflict with the Native American tribes, the British, the Spanish, and the French. The conflict came in the form of a struggle over political and economic control while the continent was under continual development. Accompanying the colonial militia from the beginning, chaplains found themselves alongside their army brethren in arms. Recruiting for the clergy was at the local level of each militia. During this era, religion played a vital role in the everyday life of many individuals. Seeking clergy for counsel and motivation was a community affair (Hourihan, 2004).

Throughout the Revolutionary Period, the army chaplaincy accounted for many acts of service and sacrifice. It was common for the Colonial clergy to raise “military units from their own congregations or localities, and often led them in battle” many times celebrating and suffering alongside the troops (Hourihan, 2004). Many of the earliest clergy, ‘shouldered their muskets, and fought like common soldiers’ (Hourihan, 2004). As a former Revolutionary chaplain, representative of Georgia, and participant in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Abraham Baldwin was one of the signers of the Constitution (Hourihan, 2004).

The history of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps traces its beginnings to November 28, 1775, with adoption of the second article of Navy Regulations. This regulation states, “the Commanders of the ships of the thirteen United Colonies are to take care that divine services be performed twice a day on board and a sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent.” Later documents support the Congressional implications that clergy were an integral part of the ship’s company. The first chaplain to serve the Continental Navy dates back to October 1778 (Kibben, 1993).

Naval regulations, dated January 25, 1802, trace the duties of the chaplaincy, which include reading prayers at stated periods, performing schoolmaster duties that include teaching and disciplining the youth, and performing funeral ceremonies. In 1839, chaplain involvement in early academia prompted the establishment of the Naval School at Annapolis, which was the precursor to the United States Naval Academy (Kibben, 1993).

In 1906, the Chaplain Corps began to steer away from the partial teaching role to embrace a board of chaplains endorsed by the Secretary of the Navy. This board created the guidelines for the commissioning of all chaplains, who had completed college, seminary, and had an endorsement from their respective denomination. This ecclesiastical endorsement validated the chaplain’s religious qualifications while the board of Navy chaplains ensured his physical health and officer qualifications. Today’s board recommendations are a consequence of what was set in motion many years ago, not only for the navy, but for the marine corps and coast guard (Kibben, 1993).

DoD Directive 1304.19, *Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, dated June 11, 2004, updates policy, responsibilities, and continues the educational and ecclesiastical requirements for appointing military chaplains within the military departments. This directive establishes policies for the chaplain that include: advising and assisting commanders to provide for the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the Constitution, assist commanders in managing religious affairs (counseling, and related moral welfare activities), and

to serve as the *principal* advisor to commanders for all issues regarding the impact of religion on military operations. This directive lays out the chaplain's role in a religiously diverse population and instructs commanders on their duties of providing comprehensive religious support to all military personnel beneath them. Ecclesiastical and religious organizations that support the Chaplaincies must understand the dynamic and diverse roles to be found in the military.

The subsequent companion publication is DoD Instruction 1304.28, *Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, dated June 11, 2004. This publication assigns inclusive responsibilities to each military service and identifies the educational and ecclesiastical requirements for prospective chaplains. This guidance modifies requirements and procedures for religious organizations to endorse religious ministry professionals for the chaplaincy, as well as establishing the criteria and procedures for the administrative separation and loss of professional qualifications of chaplains of the military.

In June 1999, DoD initiated a comprehensive review of publications dealing with the Chaplaincy and religion. This review looked at and updated publications that dealt with diversity despite the fact that there had been a decline into the number of chaplains. This decline was due to an increase in numbers of servicemen and women who list "no" religious preference, since religious preference determines the number of chaplains. The newly published versions (DoDD 1304.19 and DoDI 1304.28) took over nine years to complete (these publications were already under rewrite prior to the 1999 review process). These documents guide the basic process that currently appoints chaplains to the military services. The procedures update and codify changes by acknowledging that DoD does not have the authority to legitimize, or make legal, any religious organization. Nor can it suggest whether a particular faith group has the right to practice on a military installation.

The Department of Defense does not approve theologies or make distinctions between major, minor, or minority religious groups. Originally, there

was some degree of confusion when the endorsing list led people to believe that certain religious organizations were legitimate or when endorsing agents were able to prove legitimacy *because* they appeared on the list. As a consequence, there is no longer an approval process for endorsing agencies, just administrative criteria to meet in order to be considered an endorser. These important changes provide clarity and minimize confusion. (Mayer, 1999 & Chu, 2004).

Perhaps the most intriguing modern-day court case involving the Chaplaincies occurred in 1981 when two Harvard Law School students filed a suit challenging the constitutionality of the Army chaplaincy. The plaintiffs' claim was that the "use of tax dollars to support the chaplaincy was a violation of the 'establishment clause' (Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion), while the chaplaincy's defense was based on the 'free exercise clause' (or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .). In the end the courts upheld the validity of the military chaplaincy based on its historical support for free exercise of religion for soldiers and the unique military interest in providing such religious support for them" (Strange, 2001).

Chaplains will not only have the chance to work with almost every religious tradition, but almost every intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual assertion.<sup>2</sup> The army chaplain creed is "Pro Deo et Patri" (For God and Country); this wording is important. First, the chaplains receive education and ordination in a faith followed by going through an ecclesiastical endorsing process, which allows them to apply for the chaplaincy. Second, prospective chaplains receive military training and throughout the process cannot serve as chaplains without the approval of their endorsing agent. God comes first. Chaplains may or may not agree with the politics, motivations, or even the intent of military instruction by civilian elected officials. But, that does not matter because they do not serve to judge. The Chaplain's three core competencies are: nurturing the living, caring for the wounded, and honoring the dead. These competencies are competencies for one main purpose--to serve the soldier.

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<sup>2</sup> As pointed out by Chaplain Benson P. Bishop.

The chaplaincy and the medical career fields are the only vocations where the welfare of the soldier is the *first and foremost* mission. Distinctions between religious and medical professions allow a stricter construct of confidentiality within the chaplaincy. This just reemphasizes the fact that the chaplains' first mission is to the military service member, with the commander being one of the service members: However, this is not to suggest that military commanders don't effectively utilize the support of the chaplaincy in support of the unit. The following list helps the chaplain assist the commander in an effort to make each mission successful (Bishop-personal communication, March 18, 2005):

1. The Mission: A commander's primary role is to focus on and accomplish the mission.
2. The Unit: Cohesion builds trust, teamwork, and combat effectiveness within a specialized society
3. The Individual: Personal/Spiritual Community contributions are the most important source of strength to build upon
  - a. What is the individual's story and experience level?
  - b. Does this individual show loyalty to their peers and superiors within their community?
  - c. What type of action is fair and reasonable? (To support the command and the values of the service, the law, and the community)

Commanders are charged with overall responsibility in meeting the religious needs of their soldiers. DoD and military service publications set forth the guidelines and provide the framework of what is to be implemented. The chaplain is a key staff member who supports the commander's mission and in doing so provides guidance to the commander.<sup>3</sup> The chaplain serves as the commander's principle advisor on issues of morale, ethics, religion, and morals.

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<sup>3</sup> Chaplain Bishop (personal communication, March 18, 2005). If we look at II Samuel Chapter 12, we can see how the prophet Nathan portrays the responsibilities of a chaplain by telling King David "You are that man!" Through Nathan's parable, he is able to face David and tell him how wrong it was to take another man's wife and then secretly kill her husband who was fighting a war for the king as a highly dedicated senior officer. Speaking the truth, the prophet Nathan confronts the king with the distinct possibility of losing his friendship, status, position, or even life.

Nathan as a chaplain did several things; he had access to the "commander," King David. Nathan knew how to speak of ethical truths in a language the commander could understand. According to Bishop, however, to say nothing in the face of what is ethically or morally wrong is to condone evil. When chaplains speak from the truth, to a great power, the great power has two options...When justice prevails; it is like a pearl of great price. Many chaplains find great strength in this passage of scripture.

When service members' issues become problems, the chaplain looks at three areas in an effort to help the commander make an informed decision:

1. Can the person relate to others?—do they get along?  
Note: Within the context of providing for this person's individual religious needs and strengthening of the community—governed by Title 10 of the U.S. Code
2. Can the service member accept authority?—are they responsible?
3. Does the service member have an awareness of higher principles?—when no one is watching, what will this individual do?  
(Will he or she support the core values of the military service?)

The most important facet of the chaplaincy is that chaplains are visual reminders of the Holy through their presence in and involvement with service members. Their presence provides continual witness to the moral, ethical, and religious foundations, the value system, and the trust in God upon which this country was built. The bottom line is the chaplaincy inoculates by its presence—ensuring safeguards through moral principles, grounded in religion, in support of health and safety, discipline, morale, and cohesion. When unusual support requests for a particular religious practice are made, the chaplain looks at the practice from these perspectives: 1) is the practice legal, 2) is it consistent with military law, 3) is it open to the military community, and 4) will a commander's representative be present (Bishop-personal communication, March 18, 2005).

Chaplains wear the rank of a military officer, but they do not exercise command authority to accomplish their mission. The chaplain does have the authority exercise functions of operational supervision, control, and direction. Chaplains are noncombatants under the Geneva Convention and many have died in the line of duty. A military chaplain's responsibility is not only to his church and to the oath of (military) office, but to defend the Constitution of the U.S. against all enemies, foreign and domestic.<sup>4</sup> This means obeying lawful orders and disobeying unlawful orders just like any other military officer. A military chaplain must be prepared to provide for the free exercise of religion for all the members of the Armed Forces who come under his care, regardless of denomination or religion. The chaplain must be able to provide a wide range of

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<sup>4</sup> The chaplain community recognizes both, male and female, within officer ranks.

religious services and pastoral care to those in uniform, regardless of faith preference. Chaplains will invariably have to minister to members of other denominations and religions, most notably in combat. Again, the chaplaincy accommodates all religions and religious practices with the aim of according the utmost respect to the soldier. If enemy prisoners need religious services, an attempt is made to support that request in the best way possible. If captured, the chaplain serves the needs of fellow soldiers and ministers to captors as appropriate. The likelihood of serving other faiths means that the training for military chaplains exceeds that of the average civilian pastor.

Throughout their career, soldiers, seamen, airmen, and marines will be exposed to the Chaplaincy. Many times the chaplain becomes one of the first people with who someone speaks upon arrival at a new duty station. Support briefings notify service members about the chapel, the chaplaincy, and local religious programs and services on base. Typically, every time a service member relocates (permanent change of station, or PCS), or goes through a processing line (deployment, contingency, or combat) he will encounter a chaplain or chaplain's assistant and be able to find out information on religious matters. If a military service member needs to address a specific issue, or any issue for that matter, he might have to take the first step. Fellow service members may refer someone to the chaplain. This is often the case in lieu of or in addition to, a service member seeking medical assistance. Many times the service member will seek a chaplain so he does not have to face the stigma that is often associated with seeking medical attention. This offers the member a buffer between getting support and being singled out for one reason or another. The surest way the chaplain can help the military service member is by being visible and available.

All has not always been smooth sailing. The chaplain corps has faced its own challenges. In the 1980s, for instance, there was an even stronger opposition than in the 1970s against Mormon chaplains participating in Protestant services. In the 1990s, evangelicals were upset that the military was inducting a Muslim chaplain. The 2000s produced a legal battle for the U.S. Navy with charges of promotion discrimination against evangelical chaplains. This



ongoing class-action lawsuit could affect between 700-1000 chaplains dating back to 1988. Even more recently, the U.S. Army charged a Muslim Chaplain with espionage, mishandling classified material, failing to obey an order, making a false official statement, adultery, and conduct unbecoming an officer. In the end, the chaplain was exonerated of all charges and discharged in January 2005. Events like these tend to create even more problems for DoD as it continually strives for religious accommodation of all faiths within all of its military services.

As we end this section, it should be clear just how much religious diversity there is within America as well as in the U.S. military. Military members rely on doctrine and policy to clearly project DoD's intent. Religious accommodation at the top levels of government and the military is not to differ from religious accommodation at the lowest level. Doctrine and policies at the top need to be understood at the bottom to meet today's challenges. The Armed Forces Chaplain Board is the overarching body responsible for this top-down structure; however, it needs to be managed appropriately with personnel and funding. This thesis does not address resourcing directly, but it does stress the overall importance of the military's Chaplaincies. The bottom line is that doctrine and policy affect military units all the way down to the tactical level where cohesive teamwork and high moral character are critical.

The military is unique—it is the largest U.S. institution with an overseas presence. In uniform, service members are the most recognizable symbols of U.S. statecraft, and one unfortunate incident by a service member can negatively affect attitudes toward the government, military, society-at-large, and/or larger national interests. As service members increasingly interact with those of the other faiths—both within and outside our own military—we must be mindful that how they do so matters.

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### III. ENCOUNTERING RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS WITHIN THE MILITARY

The Bible nowhere prohibits war. In the Old Testament we find war and even conquest positively commanded, and although war was raging in the world in the time of Christ and His Apostles, still they said not a word of its unlawfulness and immorality.

General H.W. Halleck, *Elements of Military Art and Science*, 1846

Initial interest for this thesis topic came from Chaplain Malin (2003), who I mention in Chapter 1. He acknowledges that America is a religiously pluralistic society whose diversity is no more prevalent than in today's military. Naturally, this religious diversity creates controversy when Mormon chaplains lead Protestant services, Wiccans celebrate their pagan rites on military bases, Muslim chaplains serve Muslim soldiers who find themselves at war within an Islamic country, and DoD allows Native American to ingest peyote as a sacramental rite. Although the total number of military service members who officially claim membership in a minority religion or non-conventional religious group may be small in number, religious diversity in the military itself gives us a glimpse into what to anticipate for the future. This section will explore the diversity of religions within the United States military and take a critical look at vulnerable areas that might lead to potential problems in the future.

Mike Doring is a correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*. His article entitled, "Wartime in Iraq helps many in U.S. military rediscover religion," discusses the power of religion during wartime and offers a smattering of testimony from military service members. Baptism, confirmation, spiritual experiences, the call to religious ministry, Bible study, and prayer groups matter too many service members in today's military. Doring (2005) states that, "For many servicemen and women, duty in Iraq stirs intense spiritual experiences, often drawing them toward a deeper faith but sometimes challenging strongly held religious beliefs...[even] though members of the U.S. armed forces are overwhelmingly Christian, military chapels are non-denominational and in some

cases used even by Wiccans. Servicemen and women of all faiths are finding that the war has changed their approach to religion.” A Marine chaplain comments, ‘Back in the States, you have years and years to think about things, or at least you think you do,’...‘Here, they might not get [the chance to face questions when they are] older. Death and life and all the big questions are thought about at a much younger age.’ God’s hand often appears to be at work when so much seems to be beyond the service members’ will. Nevertheless, dilemmas are also testing the faith of the U.S. military “with a special intensity.” Soldiers ponder questions like, how does a soldier reconcile a benevolent God with the violent deaths of friends and the intense suffering inflicted on the wounded? How does a person heed the call to love thy enemy when that enemy kills his friends and would eagerly behead him, too? How does a person of faith kill without regret? Some deliberately seal off their religious beliefs so as not to be distracted from duty. Another soldier comments that “There’s so much hatred in my heart...There are some heinous acts.” A chaplain’s assistant stresses that it is “common for faithful Christians in the military to struggle with the contradiction between their feelings toward the enemy and their moral beliefs” such struggles become apparent during wartime.

#### **A. UNDERSTANDINGS RELIGION AND CONFLICTS IN THE MILITARY**

As stated previously, the U.S. military is a religiously pluralistic entity given that there are approximately “700 different religions and beliefs in the U.S. military attended to by the military Chaplains” (U.S. Department of State, 1999) and ‘the composition of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board has grown beyond 245 recognized groups [denominations or faith groups] in 1998.’ (Mayer, 1999). As such, the U.S. military reflects the pluralism and positive character and values of the United States.

Historically, there have been many controversies stemming from religious convictions. However, none has stirred more controversy than whether homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the military. In a Presidential Memorandum, dated January 29, 1993, President Bill Clinton directed Defense

Secretary Les Aspin to submit the draft of an Executive Order to end discrimination of homosexuals in the U.S. military.

This proposed policy generated significant protest; in addition, individuals such as Major General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, U.S. Army Director of Military Personnel Management, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, made it clear that pursuing such a policy was a mistake.

Homosexuality is incompatible with military service...The presence of such members adversely affects the ability of the armed forces to maintain discipline, good order, and morale; to foster mutual trust and confidence among servicemembers; to insure the integrity of the system of rank and command; to facilitate assignment and worldwide deployment of servicemembers who frequently must live and work under close conditions affording minimal privacy; to recruit and retain members of the armed forces; to maintain the public acceptability of military service; and to prevent breach of security. (Senate Armed Services Committee, 1993)

In his Senate Armed Services Committee (1993) testimony Senator Bob Smith expressed his opposition this way, "Well, in essence, if we have feelings, whether they be right or wrong, if we have feelings about ethical, moral, religious background, if the majority of the force feels that for whatever reason being gay is unethical or immoral, if against their religion--they would have to in essence go against all of that moral upbringing..." Senator Sam Nunn added "...Did you consider the effect this would have on some people's moral beliefs that you serve with?...there are many religions that basically condemn homosexual behavior as immoral. I am not aware of any religion that basically takes anything even remotely similar to that position regarding [issues such as] race or gender."

According to Director of Plans, Policy Development and Doctrine for the Army Chaplaincy, Chaplain (Colonel) James Daniels (personal communication, December 13, 2004), the *Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains* (Army Pamphlet 165-13) was last developed under a military contract awarded to The Institute for the Study of American Religion; the initial contract began in 1990 and the publishing date was

1993. To the best of Daniels' knowledge, the 1993 edition is the most current edition and has not been rescinded, but is most likely out of date. The Department of Defense has not updated this publication because there has been a proliferation of civilian publications that are better and more accurate. But the most compelling reason this publication is no longer current is the fact that the project director for this military contract, J. Gordon Melton, now publishes the *Encyclopedia of American Religions (Encyclopedia of American Religions)*, which is currently in its 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

The origin of the handbook for chaplains dates back to 1980, when the U.S. Army Chaplaincy was looking for useful information "on the beliefs and practices of certain 'religious' groups" (Department of the Army, 1993). This handbook is monumental in the fact that it recognizes and accepts all religious faiths regardless of whether they are practiced by millions or hundreds. This handbook suggests three main reasons for its existence (Department of the Army, 1993):

- To facilitate the provision of religious activities which serve the needs of persons of certain faiths not otherwise represented by military chaplains and others;
- To define the specific requirements and practices in such a way as to enable commanders at all levels to make effective personnel decisions in those instances when religious beliefs and practices are claimed to be in conflict with military directives and practices; and
- To provide the specific information about each group in a form that has maximum utility for military purposes, yet is approved as normative or at least acceptable by the leaders of those various groups under study.

Although this handbook is not comprehensive, it does provide a guide for chaplains and commanders.

Already, many changes were necessary in the 1980 revision due to the dissolution of particular groups and inclusion of others. The new (1993) version includes groups that meet three categorical requirements (Department of the Army, 1993): 1) Given the size of the group and the nature of assignments of Army Chaplains, is it likely that members of the group will be found on military installations where no chaplain of that particular faith or of a related faith is

stationed? 2) Is the group known to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains as one about which questions have been previously raised by existing chaplains or commanders? 3) Is the nature of the group such that questions about it may be raised by chaplains or commanders in the near future?

The handbook discusses 51 individual groups, categorizing them into one of seven broad categories: Christian Heritage Groups, Indian Heritage Groups, Islamic Heritage Groups, Japanese Heritage Groups, Jewish Groups, Sikh/Sant Mat Groups, and Other Groups. Out of these seven categories, we will examine four in somewhat more detail.

It is a complex task to talk about the specifics of any particular religion (denomination, sect, tradition, etc.) because of both nuanced and extreme differences in doctrine, beliefs, or practices. In the following cases, we cannot help but generalize as we highlight potential problems. In looking at these religions, two questions are to be addressed: which practices could create contention, which religions might generate moral or ethical challenges for members of the military (and/or are there any potential for problems in terms of competing loyalties). Some of these issues have already become problems, but I raise others through the use of hypotheticals.

### **1. Native American Church**

The term Native American refers to the citizens of the U.S. who are of American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian ancestry. According to the Central East Health Information Partnership (1997), Native Americans have had more than 200 years of participation in U.S. military actions, contributing significantly to combat operations. An estimated 12,000 Native Americans saw action in World War I and 40,000 in World War II. The warrior tradition complements the military tradition; warriors exemplify qualities of strength, honor, pride, devotion, and wisdom.

The religious diversity of American Indians precludes a comprehensive examination of their religions since Native American spirituality is often a product of particular tribes. When it comes to the Native American Church, on the other

hand, this is derivative, drawing from multiple groups “and there is also a significant infusion of Christianity, and more recently, New Age beliefs and practices permeating these traditional beliefs” (Doak, 2001). The Native American Church membership stands at 250,000 and is the largest of all the Native American religious organizations with a number of widely modified sects. Doak (2001) goes on to claim that the “church traces the sacramental use of the peyote cactus back ten thousand years” even though the Native American Church’s founding dates to only 1918. The church draws on New Age spirituality, Christianity, and peyote rituals that involve praying, singing, eating peyote, and quiet contemplation.

Under the First Amendment, citizens have the right to the free exercise of religion, but Native Americans traditionally have experienced various forms of religious persecution because of their peyote use. The 1994 Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act allows Native Americans to use peyote in their religious ceremonies. Peyote is a small, spineless cactus, whose buttons are hallucinogenic, containing the principal active ingredient of mescaline. The top portions of the cactus contain the intoxicant, which users ingest by chewing, or by soaking their buttons in water to make tea. The hallucinogenic dose of mescaline effectively lasts about 12 hours and produces rich visual hallucinations. Mescaline extraction can be natural or by synthetic means; both peyote and mescaline are listed under the Controlled Substances Act as a Schedule I hallucinogen. Federal law permits peyote use by the Native American Church.

**a. Practices**

In May 1997, military officials approved the use of peyote for religious ceremonies among Native American soldiers in the armed forces though the Federal Government still considers this a hallucinogenic drug for the rest of America. Prior to approval of this military policy, Native American soldiers had to deal with harassment, court martial, prosecution, and jail time if they practiced “peyotism.” For many tribe members, consuming peyote serves spiritual and medicinal purposes; they believe it brings them closer to God and



helps eradicate illness. According to a DoD spokesperson, “If they're using peyote in their religious practice, it's a sacrament, not a drug, just as sacramental wine is not considered a drug.” The new policy applies to over 9,000 Native Americans in the military. Only enrolled members of Indian tribes may use peyote, but the guidelines also specifically state that using, possessing, or bringing peyote onto military property is unlawful without permission from the installation commander. Medical studies show that peyote's physiological and psychological effects, including intoxication and hallucinations, do not last beyond 12 hours.

***b. Moral and Ethical Challenges***

Native American soldiers have to deal with sensitive issues of notifying their commanding officers prior to participation in religious rites involving peyote. A requirement also exists that service members notify their superiors after returning from such ceremonies because of peyote's “medicinal” effects. If DoD recognizes that peyote is sacramental, yet all commanders cannot allow its use due to their readiness requirements, why doesn't DoD just say NO? Leaving use up to individual commanders can potentially lead to inconsistencies—or the perception of inconsistency across the military. During a recent Iraqi deployment, Native Americans were authorized the use of sage bundles (sage being an all-natural ceremonial herb used like incense). Non-Indians may likely wonder, if sage will suffice, why does the military authorize the use of peyote? Just asking such questions, of course, can lead Native American Church members to feel they are misunderstood. Native Americans fear persecution and even consider their careers in jeopardy due to the “12 hour after-effect” of peyote. These aftereffects do not work well when you consider worldwide mobility status (ready for potential duty at any time—24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Also, how does this fit with 12-month long deployments? Even more to the point, what happens when a unit commander is himself a Native American who partakes of peyote as a Native American Church member?

Controversy over peyote is bound to continue because it is a substance sacred to some Native Americans, but viewed as a hallucinogenic

drug by greater society. The tension this creates is not so different from that associated with the medical use of marijuana. But also, if one considers the numbers put forward by the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), recent federal government statistics provide confirmation that nearly 80 million Americans admit to using marijuana and 20 million of them smoked marijuana during the past year. One would have to conclude that drug use is hardly under control or easy to control. Is it fair, then, for a sub-population (e.g. Native Americans) to have special dispensation to do something that, when used by other Americans, is considered illegal?

## **2. Gardnerian Wicca & Wicca**

The September 4, 1986, U.S. Appeals Court decision in *Herbert Daniel Dettmer v. Robert Landon* was a milestone for the religion of Wicca. The court's decision recognized The Church of Wicca (and Wicca, in general) as a religion that is entitled to protection under the First Amendment (Drennan, 1998).

Out of 1.4 million active duty service members, approximately 1,500 associate themselves with Wicca. "John Machate, Coordinator/CEO of the Military Pagan Network (MPN), estimates there are 10,000 practicing Pagans in the US military (active duty, guard, reserve, and dependants [sic]). This figure is based on surveys conducted for MPN" (Pagan Educational Network, n.d.). With the rise of Wicca throughout the U.S. military, one has to realize that though all Wiccans are Neo-pagans, not all Neo-pagans are Wiccans. The Air Force began recognizing various forms of Wicca in 2000, but Wiccans feel that being recognized by "federal, state, and military institutions" at all can only lead to forms of discrimination (Myers, 2004).

One of the most cited Pagan sources on Wicca is the *Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups* mentioned earlier, otherwise known as Army Pamphlet 165-13. Many pagan sites use this military source in an effort to raise awareness as well as gain legitimacy and credibility within a pluralistic society. One problem with this handbook is the fact that only some of the larger or more diverse groups are included. For example, there are a number of Wiccan covens not affiliated with the Gardnerians, though the

Gardnerians represent the largest of the coven networks (Department of the Army, 1993).

No single definition fully explains Wicca. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2004) defines Wicca as “a religion influenced by pre-Christian beliefs and practices of Western Europe that affirms the existence of supernatural power (as magic) and of both male and female deities who inhere [belong to] nature, and that emphasizes ritual observance of seasonal and life cycles.” A Wiccan is a follower of the Wicca religion. Wicca traces its roots back to the late Gerald Gardner (1884-1964), ergo Gardnerian Witchcraft. This United Kingdom-based group came into existence during the latter half of the 1940s, though given that it has borrowed symbols, seasonal days of celebration, beliefs, and deities from ancient Celtic society, Wicca claims its roots go back almost three millennia to the formation of Celtic society, circa 800 B.C. (Robinson, 2004).

Wicca today lacks a hierarchical organization, but that was not always the case. In 1973, the Council of American Witches sought to unite Wiccans in an effort to gain support for the practice of witchcraft. However, that effort only lasted a short time due to Wiccans' independent nature. A group of Wiccans typically form a coven; they gather for celebrations, rituals, and ‘magick.’ Wicca has no set way of identifying or worshiping deities; Wiccans can be monotheistic, duotheistic, polytheistic, animist, or atheist. Monotheistic Wiccans tend to believe that one supreme being exists as a goddess and god acting together as a single deity. Duotheists worship a female goddess and male god called the Lady and Lord, whereas polytheists recognize many goddesses and gods. Animists believe spirits exist in everything. Wiccans can even consider themselves atheists insofar as they view goddesses and gods as symbols, not as living entities.

In 1999, Representative Bob Barr (Republican-Georgia) became incensed at the Pentagon for allowing pagan rituals to be practiced on U.S. military bases while a DoD official argued that it would be unconstitutional for DoD to “evaluate or judge the merits of specific faiths;” the ground rules for religious services have to adhere to health, safety standards, and maintenance of “good order and

discipline.” Barr disagreed vehemently, attempting to amend a \$290 billion defense authorization bill prohibiting the practice of Wicca or any other form of witchcraft at DoD facilities. Shortly after this flare-up, there were hints of Wiccans wanting their own chaplain. In a letter to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, Chaplain (Brigadier General) Gaylord T. Gunhus (1999), Deputy Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army, writes, “No Wiccan group, at present, has received ecclesiastical endorsement authority from the Armed Forces Chaplains' Board (AFCB). This would be the first step in the endorsement process. Even if granted such authority by the AFCB, the Army sees no need at present to access a Wiccan Chaplain.” As of 2005, still no “organizational” structure meets the ecclesiastical endorsement that is required for Wicca to be recognized.

In 2003, aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, shipmates gathered in “Wicca circles for meditation, study Bible verses, offer up devout prayers to Allah, work their rosary beads, celebrate the Jewish Sabbath”—all of this while afloat in the Persian Gulf (Lyke, 2003). Or, as a member of a Wicca group put it ‘I come for the good vibes.’ Since there are no Wicca Chaplains, commanders can approve a qualified (military) lay leader if he or she meets certain approval requirements. Lay leaders appointed by the commanding officer, are volunteers supervised and trained by the command chaplain to meet the needs of a particular religious faith group when its own military chaplains are not available. The lay leader may conduct services, but may not exercise any other activities reserved for the ordained clergy. According to Bishop (personal communication, March 18, 2005) a Pagan lay leader supported this particular Wiccan group. According to the lay leader ‘...Wicca is not what you see in movies, or read in books.’ On Saturday nights, the Wiccans enter the chapel and after ‘checking their negative energy in at the door’ they make a circle on the floor; light incense and four candles representing earth, air, fire and water; and play classical music with howls from wolves. The members provide their symbols and tools, books, tarot cards, stones, necklaces with ancient Celtic knots and pentacles. Meditation is used to guide to the energy within them. In this wartime environment, this is how Wiccans apparently find a moment of inner peace. (Lyke, 2003)

In a newspaper account, one journalist reported that Wiccans were seeking others' understanding and tolerance after "U.S. military personnel pelted American Wiccan servicemen and servicewomen in Iraq with bottles and rocks as they worshipped in a sacred circle" (Myers, 2004). This incident led the Pentagon to bring in a national expert to conjure up some "Wicca 101" for the troops. This was necessary because most had gleaned information from television shows like "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Charmed." Education was thought to be the best tool for clearing up the misunderstandings.

**a. Practices**

Wiccans believe in the existence of a supreme divine force (or power) that is not separate from the universe, but part of it. The supreme force came from god and goddess and manifests itself various forms within the universe. This force does not care about its own creation, but Wiccans want to connect to this creative force as they perform 'magick'—which is something different from "illusionary or deceptive" magic. Casting spells and performing incantations are the actions of 'magick.' The pentagram is the symbol that represents Wiccans, their beliefs, and the power they believe their religion holds. Many Wiccans consider all living things to be sacred and show a special interest in ecological issues. Wiccans celebrate eight festivals (Sabbats) as a means of bringing into harmony the seasonal rhythms of "Nature." Most groups meet for worship at each Full Moon, and on the start of a New Moon, but many other celebrations exist. Celebrations are preferably done in the nude (skyclad), but military officials ensure that this aspect is not allowed on any military installation.

**b. Moral and Ethical Challenges**

The Wiccan Rede (*Rede* means advice or counsel) can be summarized as "*An harm ye none, do what ye will.*" The Rede is the Wiccans' equivalent of the "Golden Rule." This is the *only* moral truth for those who practice Wicca and serves as the framework for ethical thinking. In other words, Wiccans are free to do what they want as long as it does not hurt anyone, including themselves. Wiccans do not, then, share the same values as Christians, since the basic Wiccan ethic is "do no harm," which is substantially

different from Matthew 22:37-39 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself' (New International Version). This suggests that Wiccans do not share the same value system as that of most members of the military who regard the Golden Rule of "love your neighbor as yourself" as a fundamental truth.<sup>5</sup>

There is likewise an absence in the Wiccan ethic of an obligation to help one's neighbor (the moral principle of beneficence, to do good). From a Christian point of view, Wicca is hedonist and is a religion all about self and using an unnamed force to support the "Craft" (or witchcraft) through self-improvement or good works.

One can easily see how conflict can arise between a commander's responsibility for mission accomplishment and the religious rights of a Wiccan. Historically, little guidance was given to the commander about how to handle religious needs. But now Commanders are encouraged to accommodate unique religious worship requirements of their soldiers when mission requirements permit, by allowing them the time and opportunity to worship according to their customs. Commanders are bound to accommodate these practices no matter how "bizarre" they may seem. Fellow soldiers are also expected to respect these practices and not discriminate or offend. However, service members who are non-religious (or have no religious preference) may find these concepts difficult to grasp and accommodate. Nevertheless, this is especially hard for those service members who regard Wiccans as pagans or believe worshipping idols or multiple gods is wrong.

Wiccans in the military want acceptance in a community that is predominantly Christian. Wiccans mark 'No Religious Preference' on their dog tags instead of 'Wicca' even though DoD officially recognizes them. Wiccans cite persecution as the reason. Ironically, today's religious plurality leads them to feel insecure about having to defend their faith on an equal footing. Wiccans often criticize those who question their religious beliefs and/or practices as

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<sup>5</sup> Leviticus 19:18 (New International Version)

discriminatory. This type of reaction breeds defensiveness and closes the door for dialogue with other religious groups.

“Prejudice against Wiccans is the result of public confusion between Witchcraft and Satanism,” yet both contain similar looking religious symbols that “represent power, a rejection of other people’s belief, or a deep understanding of the inner workings of the universe” (The Department of the Army, 1993 and Baker, 2004). Wiccans take great pride in not conforming to a single belief system about deities. They discourage proselytizing or attempts to convert Wicca members and seek toleration among all religions. However, they also show contempt for religions that hold “absolute” truths and not relative ones. Wiccan members rarely invite non-participating observers to their rituals, yet they seek acceptance in the military community. This, clearly, leads to tensions.

### **3. The Great Monotheistic Religions**

The three great monotheistic or Abrahamic, religions of the world are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They are all descendants of the ancient Semitic religious tradition of Abraham, the biblical patriarch, described in the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur’an. These three religions claim the loyalty of about half of the world’s religious adherents.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Deity along with His will and prophetic history. These monotheistic faiths teach that God created the world in six days, creating Adam as the first man with Eve as his wife, God sent prophets into the world, and that on Judgment Day God will vindicate the righteous and destroy the ungodly. These same religions significantly depart from one another and can even be said to have irreconcilable differences. Chronologically, each religion looks to its founder: Judaism to Moses, Christianity to Jesus Christ, and Islam to Muhammad, while each ignores anything that follows. This has led to many disputes and debates.

#### **4. Judaism**

Judaism is one of the world's oldest living religions. Its spiritual and ethical principles are embodied in the *Torah* (Hebrew Scriptures) and the *Talmud*. Today there are 13 million Jews worldwide, 5 million residing in the U.S. It is estimated that 1,500 to 2,000 Jewish service members are deployed in the Persian Gulf region. Yet, of the 24 Jewish chaplains in the Army, only five were sent to fulfill the needs of what could arguably be the neediest of the Army's servicemen (Yuhas, 2005).

Judaism influenced the development of Christianity and Islam, and had a major influence on Western civilization; Christianity, the eventually dominant religious faith of the West, was in large part a child of the Hebrew religion. When we speak of the Judeo-Christian heritage of Western civilization, we refer not only to the concept of monotheism, but also to ideas about law, morality, and social justice that have become important parts of Western culture. All of the major Western religions find their roots in Judaism.

Jewish law begins with the immutable and unchangeable laws found in what is called the Written Law (the Torah) and its companion law, the Oral Law (Oral Torah or Talmud). The Talmud is a vast compilation of rabbinic discussions about Jewish law, ethics, and customs. The Oral Law explains how to fulfill the Torah's commandments. Common sense suggests the need for some sort of oral tradition to accompany the Written Law, because the Torah alone is an insufficient guide to Jewish life (Jewish Virtual Library, 2005).

Indeed, without an oral tradition, some of the Torah's laws would be incomprehensible. The need for the Oral Law mitigates certain categorical Torah laws that would have caused grave problems if carried out literally. The Written Law, for example, demands an "eye for an eye." (Exodus 21:24). Does this mean that the accidental blinding of a person requires the blinding of the perpetrator? The Torah seems specific on this matter, but the Oral Law explains that monetary compensation for the value of an eye suffices. There are three reasons the Oral Law was necessary: "the frequent lack of details in Torah legislation, the



incomprehensibility of some terms in the Torah, and the objections to following some Torah laws literally” (Jewish Virtual Library, 2005).

**a. Practices**

Even with the Oral Law, however, there is considerable room for interpretation. Consequently, different Jewish groups adhere to the Law somewhat differently. Orthodox Judaism is the oldest, most conservative, and most diverse form of Judaism. Orthodox Jews attempt to follow the original form of Judaism and they view every word in their sacred texts as being divinely inspired. Orthodox Jews believe that both the Written and Oral Torah are of divine origin, and represent the word of God, which dates back to God's revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai. Conservative and Reform Jews believe that some kind of Oral Law was always necessary to make the Torah comprehensible and workable; they reject the belief that most of the Talmud dates back to Moses' time. They view the Talmud and the Oral Law as an evolving system, in which successive generations of rabbis discussed and debated how to incorporate the Torah into their lives. With this the case, they feel free to ignore, modify, or change the Oral Law. The differing views of Orthodox and Conservative Jews about both the antiquity and binding nature of the Oral Law are perhaps the major issue separating them. The three major Jewish movements in the U.S. are Orthodox (traditional), Conservative (traditional or liberal), and Reform (liberal or modern) Judaism. Such differences should suggest how complex the discussion could get on the topic of Jewish law and morality. (Jewish Virtual Library, 2005).

The Jewish law (or Halakhah) is more than just a set of beliefs about God, man, and the universe. Judaism represents a comprehensive way of life filled with rules and practices that affect every aspect of daily living. These practices increase the spirituality in a person's life, because they turn the most trivial, mundane acts, such as eating, into acts of religious significance. The Halakhah's 613 commandments (mitzvot) come from the Torah and are augmented by laws that are both rabbinic and long-standing customs. All of these have the status of Jewish law and all are equally binding. The only

difference is that the penalties for violating laws and customs instituted by the rabbis are less severe than the penalties for violating Torah law.

Many of these mitzvot cannot be observed at this time for various reasons. For example, a large number of laws relate to sacrifices and offerings, which can only be made in the Temple, and the Temple does not exist today (it was destroyed in 70 A.D.). Some of the laws relate to the theocratic state of Israel, its king, its supreme court, and its system of justice, and cannot be observed because the theocratic state of Israel does not exist today.

Jewish followers eat kosher (meaning spiritually pure) meals that have been prepared according to Scriptural commands. Pork and shellfish are taboo, as is the eating of milk and meat at the same time. Animals must be slaughtered with the blood completely drained, by a special person. The sale of kosher foods must have the approval of a rabbi.

#### ***b. Moral and Ethical Challenges***

Jews are a minority population in the U.S. military and occasionally feel neglected by their commanders because important holidays are not honored with time off. Military Generals may favor Christian holidays and only issue memoranda in support of Jewish holidays. Holiday passes become coveted by Jews trying to observe Jewish holidays such as Passover and Yom Kippur. The celebration of Passover signifies the Jewish people's freedom from Egyptian bondage that took place approximately 3,500 years ago. Yom Kippur is the most sacred holy day; it is a day for confession, repentance, and prayers of forgiveness of wrongdoings committed during the year against God and His covenant. It is also the day on which a Jewish person's fate is set for the upcoming year. Jewish people devote the day to fasting and prayer. This exacerbates the Jews' sense of being a minority and concerns about Christian dominance. (Yuhas, 2005).

Jewish dietary practices prohibit eating specific foods or require lengthy standards in food preparation. Jews also have times when fasting will occur or when they abstain from certain food and drink. Field rations come in the

form of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) and are available as kosher meals. But, will a Jew neglect eating a non-kosher MRE if a kosher meal is not available? Each soldier's physical and mental strength depends on teamwork, and not eating would set a bad precedent for not being at full strength when lives are at stake.

Since 1996, Jews have been authorized to wear the yarmulke with the military uniform because this type of head covering does not create substantial harm to military discipline or esprit de corps. Yet, wearing a yarmulke is no easy decision because it signals that the wearer is a committed Jew. There is no history behind the yarmulke in the Torah. Many non-Jews or non-practicing Jews do not understand why this head covering needs to be worn and many practicing Jews do not have the courage to fulfill the role of the "model Jew" and wear it publicly.

More recently, the role of a Baptist chaplain has created quite a stir among the Jewish community when one of their own converted to Christianity while in Iraq. Jews felt that the chaplain stepped over the line in supporting this service member's desire to convert. Or as Steve Yuhas (2005) puts it, "when the audience becomes a captive one (because peace turns to war or life becomes death), the job of the chaplain becomes more complicated but [he] must still remain neutral."

What happened was this: during a 2004 mission a convoy was ambushed just north of Baghdad and one of its soldiers was killed. The chaplain was the first one to tell the battalion commander that a soldier had been lost—"This death rocked our battalion. Soldiers began to examine their own lives and contemplate life after death" (Williamson, 2005). The chaplain describes how he became a pastor to the 400 service members during their first few hours of grief. Shortly after this event, "a young Jewish soldier came into my tent and said he wanted to talk about Jesus...that night he knelt down and gave his life to Christ." However, what occurred from the Jewish point of view was that this Chaplain "cast aside his neutrality and turned a group of 400 mourning men of many faiths into his own Southern Baptist congregation" (Yuhas, 2005). Jewish critics feel that the chaplain "crossed the line from spiritual supporter to Baptist

proselytizer.” Some suggest, “religious conversion should be conducted when a man is of a clear mind and without the pressure of battle.” However, from a different perspective this statement makes no sense when you consider how critical spirituality is to service members during wartime and combat. Although, Yuhas (2005) suggests that military service members should wait until peacetime to make decisions about conversion. He seems to forget the importance of religious tradition during times of combat and warfare.

In actuality, this case might signal that civil society really does not have any idea what the military service member faces during wartime, especially when the individual in question is searching for a solid religious foundation. I do not think that waiting for peacetime is a realistic expectation when it comes to making an eternal decision.

What complicates this case is the chaplain’s attitude: ‘There are a lot of soldiers who are empty on the inside and look to their battalion chaplain to give them something to hang on to...I give them Jesus, because I believe Jesus Christ is the only thing we have to hold on to’ (Williamson, 2005). One has to remember that the Jewish soldier entered the chaplain’s tent voluntarily saying ‘...he wanted to talk about Jesus’ (Williamson, 2005). The Covenant and The Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces, in Article 11, states, “I will not proselytize from other religious bodies, but I retain the right to evangelize those who are not affiliated” (NCMAF, 2004). Technically, when a soldier brings an issue to a chaplain, the chaplain can evangelize if the soldier claims no religious affiliation or asks about Jesus. This gives the Christian chaplain full reign to speak his mind to the Jew or anyone else for that matter (Rubin, 2005).

An even thornier set of questions revolve around the issue of whether American Jews might place their allegiance to Israel above the U.S. government? Recent espionage cases point to this as a potential problem, but more significant is that due to these espionage cases—and the strength of pro-Israel Jewish lobbies like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), service members and commanders may question the loyalty of the Jews in uniform.

## **5. Christianity**

In the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures), the path or way to God was through a priest. People went to the temple to make their sacrifices and gained access to God through the priest. In the New Testament, we are taught that Jesus Christ is our access to the Father (God) and none of us needs to go through anyone to reach God—not a priest, a rabbi or a pastor. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended into Heaven and Christians are waiting for His eventual return to earth.

### ***a. Practices***

As far as Christians are concerned, Jesus Christ came not to abolish the Jewish law found in the Old Testament, but to fulfill Scripture. Controversy surrounds Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, when he tells non-Jews (Gentiles) that the laws in the Old Testament are no longer binding.

In the New Testament, Jesus reduces the Old Testament down to two sentences, "...‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is...‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’" Love is the primary motivator for the laws found in the New Testament of the Holy Bible.

To understand Christian practices, one must understand the difference between the liturgical, which emphasizes standard traditional rituals in worship, and the non-liturgical, which emphasizes unstructured, spontaneous worship. There are key liturgical practices that normally do not create much controversy within the military community, such as communion, baptism, marriage, and Jesus' birth and resurrection. This is in part because they take place during Sunday worship away from the workplace. However, other practices, such as discipleship and proselytizing, often get confusing and/or create controversy for non-Christians.

Discipleship means that we follow Jesus through His Biblical teachings.<sup>6</sup> This also means that we are trying to become like Jesus in many ways, but fall short due to sin. Nevertheless, Jesus provides the means by which we put others first. Jesus' teachings enable Christians to make proper moral choices throughout their lifetime. Every opportunity of every day can offer a place of turning, regardless of whether others know you are a Christian, or know the motives of your heart.

Proselytizing is an act of attempting to convert another person to your religion. As long as proselytizing neither involves verbal harassment nor creates a disturbance, it is a protected form of speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. However, proselytizing can take two extreme forms. On the one hand, a Christian may simply share religious beliefs with a non-Christian. This dialogue may be a back-and-forth discussion about different beliefs. This increases the awareness of members of different faiths and may lead to conversion. On the other hand, one can approach a person from a position of superiority. This is sometimes the posture struck by those who feel that their religion is the only true religion. Such exchanges tend to be hostile by nature and generate ill feeling, animosity, and conceivably even violence.

The lines can blur quite rapidly between discipleship and the different types of proselytizing; however, the former is typically more passive while the latter is more active and contentious. This is one of the major stumbling blocks between Christians and Wiccans (as well as Pagans) because Christians like to discuss issues and Wiccans want to avoid discussion for fear of discrimination.

Evangelical Christians have recently been accused of posing problems for the U.S. Air Force Academy. Robert Weller (2005) reports that "anti-Semitism and other forms of religious harassment have become pervasive." Is this a case of Evangelical Christians doing things that aren't very Christ-like? Alternatively, there are many non-Christians and/or nominal Christians who are

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<sup>6</sup> Found in Luke 9:23

labeled “born-again” or devout. Many articles in the media, written by liberals, can be slanted in an effort to make Christians seem more contentious than they are.

***b. Moral and Ethical Challenges***

Christianity and Judaism share the same basic ethical code. Judaism and Christianity teach that God has a special plan for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people, but the significant difference between the two revolves around Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a coming Messiah. Jews do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Christianity also teaches that Jesus was God in the (human) flesh so He could lay down His life to pay the price for our sins. Judaism denies that such a sacrifice was necessary. Jesus Christ is the one reason why Christianity and Judaism differ.

Scholarly work on Christian ethics has generated numerous articles on “just war” theory, which deals with the justification for how and why wars are fought. The theoretical aspects are concerned with ethically justifying war and forms of warfare. Historically, just war theory has led to the application of rules in various wars across the ages. The Geneva and Hague conventions are examples of historical rules aimed at limiting certain kinds of warfare. Over time, changes in ethical thinking have led to changes to these conventions (Cook, 2001).

Historically, the just-war tradition normally involves two similar enemies. When enemies differ greatly because of different religious beliefs, war conventions rarely apply. It is only when the enemy can be tangibly dealt with that these conventions can be helpful; otherwise, the motivation to abide by these rules is moot for at least one side. Asymmetrical warfare will always be condemned or denounced in a “just-war” environment because warfare will not be applied equally or universally. However, religiously motivated warfare will tend to be asymmetric (Cook, 2001).

If Christians profess that “love” is the primary motivator behind the Holy Bible, how can Christians serve in the U.S. military—especially when you consider the “core function of the military...all activities in the military ultimately serve to sustain the ‘pointy end of the spear.’ In its most formal and sterile formulation, their [the military’s] purpose is ‘national defense.’ A more direct expression is ‘fighting and winning America’s wars.’ When military people talk among themselves, they state the unvarnished truth: it is [war involves] ‘killing people and breaking things’” (Cook, 2001).

Christians number in the hundreds of thousands in the U.S. military and since June 30, 1973, the U.S. military has relied on an all-volunteer professional military to fill its ranks. Martin L. Cook (2001) suggests, “Anyone familiar with the culture of the American military knows that many officers and enlisted soldiers identify themselves as pious Christians. In their minds, there is no tension between their commitments to faith and to the military. Indeed, many military personnel believe that their commitment to a cause larger than self, and to possible self-sacrifice in defense of that cause, is one of the highest and noblest of Christian callings.” Cook (2001) goes on to say that, “voluntary service in support of that relative peace is a self-sacrificial Christian calling.” Yet many service members come to know (or renew their belief in) Christ while in the military and not beforehand. Christianity can strengthen members’ resolve during peacetime, but this faith, or finding of faith, is even more sought after during combat and wartime.

Problems Christianity can pose for non-Christians can stem from viewing the U.S. military as a Christian military. When military actions result in negative consequences, outsiders may attribute the problems to the “Christian” military of the U.S. In looking at the Abu Ghraib incident, images of abuse concerning Iraqi detainees not only fuel anti-Americanism that endangers American lives, but also suggest that Christians are at the root of the problem. Military commanders will need to consider what the consequences might be when the enemy captures American soldiers.



## **6. Islam**

Islam is the religion founded by Muhammad, who was born in present-day Saudi Arabia around 570 A.D. Allah revealed the Qur'an in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years, ending in 632 A.D., the year of his death. The Muslim religion claims about 1% of all U.S. military personnel. DoD estimates around 4,200 Muslims, while advocacy groups suggest closer to 15,000, with the largest group of Muslims being African-American (Marx, 2003).

In June 2003, Army Lieutenant General William "Jerry" Boykin, an outspoken evangelical Christian, appeared in dress uniform before a religious group in Oregon to declare that radical Islamists hated the United States "because we're a Christian nation and our foundational roots are Judeo-Christian" (Cooper, 2003, p. A1).

On September 10, 2003, an Army Muslim chaplain was detained in Jacksonville, Florida after returning from Camp Delta in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Captain Yousef "James" Yee spent 76 days in a prison cell while authorities built a capital espionage case against him. Formal charges have been reduced to mishandling classified material, failing to obey an order, making a false official statement, adultery and conduct unbecoming an officer for allegedly downloading pornography on his government laptop. However, even these charges were dismissed after a General overturned them. In the aftermath of Yee's case, it is easy to assume his religion led to a series of suspicions that, in turn, misled those who continually investigated him.

### **a. Practices**

Muslims believe that the Jewish God is the same as Allah and that Jesus is a divinely inspired prophet, but that He was neither divine nor crucified. Islam accepts the Jewish and Christian theology of the Hebrew and Christian Bible and the teachings of Jesus as valid in principle although not in detail, and views Islam as a continuation of and a replacement for these religions.

The Five Pillars of Islam include prayer, in which Muslim followers worship five times a day: at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and nightfall. Muslims do this to show respect for God; believers clean themselves according

to a particular ritual and prostrate themselves on the ground in the direction of Mecca while reciting certain passages. The holy day of Islam is Friday. Muslims worship as usual on this day, yet there is a slight change as to the men's and women's roles in prayer. On this day, all male believers are supposed to gather at noon in a local mosque to hear a sermon, thus making it somewhat akin to Saturday worship for Jews and Sunday worship for Christians. Within a predominantly Christian military, a service member may think that religious worship should only fall on Sunday, but the issue of accommodating various types of prayer of various times of the day, never mind on different days clearly presents challenges to commanders.

Another Muslim pillar includes fasting during Ramadan, which means abstaining from food and drink, as well as smoking and sex, between sunrise and sunset during the ninth month in the Muslim calendar. Abstinence during Ramadan brings Muslims to greater awareness of God's presence and helps them acknowledge their gratitude for God's provisions in their lives. It serves to heighten a sense of community among believers as Muslims around the world join in the performance of this ritual. Also, Muslims, like Jews, follow certain dietary laws on a more routine basis. Their MREs must meet Halal certification—something that might pose problems for commanders of Muslims in the same way that it does for commanders of Jews.

***b. Moral and Ethical Challenges***

Reviewing sacred documents is difficult especially when a Christian tries to establish credibility with a Muslim. This thesis may only scratch at the surface, but the confusion that surrounds the doctrine of abrogation, which is paramount to understanding the Qur'an, still deserves mention. Abrogation means to rescind something and replace it with something else. Abrogation leads to controversy even among Muslims. For example, most scholars believe that the stoning verse regarding adultery, which was once in the Qur'an, has been abrogated from recitation, but remains in effect in the Sharia. Abrogation creates two severe problems for the Qur'an as a Holy text:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Abrogation: <http://www.knowislam.info/drupal/abrogation>

- If the Qur'an is the actual Word of God, then it is eternal and, is thus incapable of change. The abrogation problem suggests that the Qur'an was created, and cannot be the word of God.
- If the Qur'an is the word of God, it should be perfect and no verse can be superior to another.

One obvious concern seems to be that no one seems to agree on the doctrinal aspects of abrogation. It seems quite plausible that whatever support a Muslim seeks for a particular position it can be found in a variety of Qur'anic commentaries. An overabundance of commentaries is available to choose from with a wide smattering of viewpoints. One might, of course, ask, "How is this different from what is found in any religion?" Unfortunately, only Islam promotes violent jihad and prescribes specific behavior toward non-Muslims.

Unfortunately, too, the current war on terrorism may not be a religious war for the U.S., but it can become so for Muslims when they are deployed to an Islamic country. Consequently, Muslims who are in the U.S. military continue to define their role as service members. For instance, one private, Ghanim Khalil, voiced his opposition to the war effort as his U.S. National Guard unit readied itself for deployment. With numerous U.S. troops deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq, many Islamic converts felt divided loyalties along with increased discrimination. As Khalil, a Pakistani-American put it, 'You might feel differently about this war if a bomb was being dropped on your house accidentally...Murder is murder' (Marx, 2003). Khalil also suggested that discrimination was quite regular against new Muslim recruits in the Marine Corp. It was these concerns, in part, that led him to become an Islamic lay leader who conducted religious services for his fellow Muslims. But when he began to notice a withholding of specially prepared (halal) food for Muslims and raised complaints, which in turn led to his loyalty being questioned, he stepped down from his lay leader duties. Khalil's service contract expired before his deployment became inevitable, so refusing to go to war turned out not to be necessary for him.

Meanwhile, Muslim service members hesitant to make war on fellow Muslims do not qualify for conscientious objector status because they must prove they oppose all war. They can't very well do this by claiming Islam is a religion of peace. Bill Gavin, with the Center of Conscience and War, states 'They must be opposed to any and all war, and not any particular war...If someone articulates that this is their objection—that they would have to kill other Muslims—they don't qualify' (Marx, 2003).

Since September 11, 2001, Islam remains at the forefront of issues with which the military has yet to come to terms. In March 2003, Sergeant Asan Akbar, an U.S. Army soldier, most likely acted out of resentment when he threw grenades into tents at a 101st Airborne Division command center, killing two fellow service members. Akbar, an African-American who converted to Islam, wounded fifteen other soldiers, including the division commander, three of them severely. The charges against him ranged from murder to treason. He vocalized his thoughts as he was taken into custody 'You guys are coming into our countries and you're going to rape our women and kill our children.'<sup>8</sup> This episode remains unsettling for a number of reasons, but most of all because it exposes something that commanders have ignored or not thought about seriously: the presence of radical, anti-American Muslims within the ranks. There is a case to be made that for a small group of U.S. soldiers an anti-American *fatwah* (an Islamic "holy" death warrant) issued in mosques around the world could come before the oath of loyalty they took to the U.S. It is even more disturbing to think that an American-born Muslim might more closely identify with Saddam Hussein or Usama Bin Laden than with the U.S. President. If the War on Terrorism is truly a long protracted war, who is to say that Al-Qaeda's recruitment of militant Islamists for service in the U.S. military isn't already underway? These scenarios, no matter how hypothetical, undermine fellow service members' trust, and call into question just how loyal one's fellow Americans—belonging to different religions—might be to the United States and its military mission.

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<sup>8</sup> Various sources.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. CONCLUSIONS**

The study of religion should make an individual *more* comfortable with his or her own faith as well as that of others. If not, a reexamination of your faith is probably necessary. When military service and religion mix, we should not avoid the subject, but harness it, assess it, and grow in our beliefs. Is it possible to serve in the military and be religious? If you are religious, can you present your beliefs to a fellow service member? The answer should be yes, to both! But then, what happens when pluralism erodes morality and you have to decide between religious convictions and military service?

The spirituality of the soldier is likely to become much more important in the future and needs to be examined with the questions raised above borne in mind. Some of these questions are difficult to answer, especially when policy is written at DoD level yet problems begin to brew at the lowest organizational levels—in the units or in the field. A critical “on-going” need for Arabic speakers in the Army has led to problems because there are so few U.S. soldiers who have a mastery of the language and customs. There is a significant trust issue as organizations, in trying to attain the skills of ‘less commonly taught languages’ and a better understanding in regional studies, recruit individuals who may not share mainstream American values (Bowman, 2005). Just as unit-level leaders need to ensure the competency of those newly recruited with linguistic skills, this same echelon of commander needs to be aware of the spirituality of each of the soldiers under him/her and how that might affect teamwork.

Only time will truly tell if the military is currently experiencing an escalation in religious conflict or is just another sine wave that will diminish over time. Regardless, religion will continue to play an important role in service members’ everyday spiritual life. Moreover, according to many religions, God will have His day of Judgment and, at that time, the faith of the individual will be the only thing

that matters. In this case, the atheist, agnostic, Native American, Wiccan, Jew, Muslim, and Christian will hope that their religion is the right one.

Although Veterans Affairs data is inconclusive, some chaplains comment that they “find soldiers who have a faith are able to withstand significant more battle trauma than soldiers who do not have one—I find they have lower incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and I find they attach and re-integrate into society quicker than those who live within a totally intellectual or physical existence” (Bishop-personal communication, March 18, 2005).

Do we have to be religious to be ethical? It depends on one’s point of view. Here I would simply emphasize that we should not confuse someone’s religion with the act of being religious. It is my belief that the origin and essence of moral and ethical thought finds their basis in religion.

## **B. AREAS FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE RESEARCH**

The U.S. military continues the religious accommodation promised by the Constitution and does so primarily through the Chaplaincies of each military service. Many refer to this as the “other” Great Experiment within the military. The term ‘religion’ throughout this thesis has encompassed more than just religion itself, also referring to a belief about deity, faith, spirituality, and philosophy. Each religion suggests a moral and/or ethical code that can mesh well or not with military service. Even though these can be compatible with military service, they may not lead to compatibility among military service members. The morality of each soldier, sailor, airman, or marine roots itself in religion. How does the commander, chaplain, or service member reconcile moral issues when conflicts present themselves? In my mind, the spirituality of each service member is the most important challenge facing the military community now and in the future. DoD will need to likewise grasp this before it can attempt to resolve any future conflicts or dilemmas.

While there are many documents that discuss the U.S. military and religion, not many discuss religion or religious issues as these distress individuals within the U.S. military today. Even when religion is addressed within the context of the military the discussion is normally limited to the Chaplaincy,

religious accommodation, or religious plurality: much of what passes for dialogue does not address controversial religious issues. In the course of my research, it became apparent rather quickly that no historical overview of religious issues affecting today's military exists. At the very least, we need a better understanding about religious plurality over time to be able to assess current trends and determine the extent to which they have changed and are changing.

The immediate results from the 2004 Presidential race appeared to offer a glimpse of the evangelical or "value" vote. There was a lot of talk about 'red' states versus 'blue' states. Surely this is something DoD should be interested in, especially with recruiting shortfalls and adherence to core value standards. One might find the voting pattern to a number of correlations among service members.

Given Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), it seems important to understand the extent to which religion is playing an instrumental role in daily combat for the soldier, seaman, airman, and marine. Without systematically collecting data about this, it is hard to know where religiosity is waning or how religiosity within the military tracks with trends in broader society.

Finally, let me return to a comment I made at the closing of Chapter I concerning religion as a topic versus just Islam. This thesis could have very well focused solely on the challenges posed by and to Muslims in today's military. Even though this war is touted as not being a religious war it does affect those who are religious in the military due to the fact that Christianity and Islam command the allegiance of over half the world's population. A more in-depth study should be undertaken to consider the potential conflict these two religions holds for service members in the U.S. military.

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## APPENDIX

The following figures are excerpts from the *Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains* (Department of the Army, 1993):

### NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH

ADDRESS: Current address unavailable for this edition.

LEADERSHIP: The Church is led by a president elected every two years.

MEMBERSHIP: Not reported.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN: The use of various drugs that alter the consciousness of the worshiper has a long history in world religion. In Pre-Columbian America, the peyote cactus, which contains mescaline, a consciousness-altering substance, was used by the Aztecs and their descendants. By the nineteenth century the practice was firmly entrenched in the Indian tribes of Mexico and in the years following the American Civil War spread to the tribes of the southwest--the Mescalero Apache, the Kiowa, and the Comanche. From these it spread to the tribes of the Plains and into Oklahoma, where its use aided the "vision search~ so integral to Plains Indians' religious quest.

As its use grew, two trends emerged. One set of peyote users had a traditional orientation, while a second group were Christian. Both groups function within the Native American Church, and their existence accounts for the wide variety of practices encountered.

The formalization of a "church" among peyote users came in direct response to growing opposition from the government, the Indian missionaries and certain fellow-tribe members. As early as 1896, the Oto Church of the First Born was incorporated, the first of several like bodies among various tribes. Then in 1918 an intertribal group led in the formation of the Native American Church in response to a proposal by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to have Congress pass an anti-peyote law. By 1944 the Church had spread across the United States and became the "Native American Church of the United States." Continual spread led eleven years later to it becoming the "Native American Church of North America."

BASIC BELIEFS: The Christian members of the Native American Church acknowledge a Triune God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Traditional members speak only of God. All believe in brotherly love, often expressed as three principles of respect for all people, compassion for all people, and forgiveness for all people.

Peyote is considered a sacrament and is venerated. It is eaten as a means of communing with the Spirit of the Almighty. Members refer to Romans 14:6 as a Biblical reference related to the taking of peyote: "He who eats anything does it to the honor of the Lord, for he gives thanks to God for the food." The Native American Church is the only religious body to have received court exemption to use in their religious practices what is otherwise a controlled substance.

The Native American Church has no formal creedal statements or authoritative literature, though the Christian congregations use the Bible extensively. For information on the Native American Church, consult *The Peyote Story* by Bernard Roseman; *The Peyote Cult* by Weston La Barre and *The Peyote Religion* by J.S. Slotkin.

PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS: In general, the Native American Church teaches

its members to live a high ethical life and is against immoral conduct. Alcohol and dangerous drugs are forbidden. They also teach respect and humility in the presence of one's elders.

Most congregations will celebrate Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas, New Year's, and Armistice Day. There are special services on the birthdays of individuals, days of mourning, and for healing.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** The Native American Church is organized at three levels. On the national level, an annual convention speaks for the Church and elects officers. The President and other officers serve two-year terms. Representation to the national convention is by chapters, which may consist of all Church members of the Church of one tribe in a single area (usually a state). Each chapter has two votes at the national convention. The chapter is further divided into congregations (one or more). Each congregation is organized democratically and is the focus of worship.

**ROLE OF MINISTERS:** The organization of local congregations is under the leadership of democratically elected Presidents. Presidents are responsible for all Church activities with the possible exception of the worship service itself.

**WORSHIP:** In some traditions a priest leads the worship and is assisted by the fire chief (who keeps the fire going) and the drummer. In others, the elder men lead.

While group worship is not actually "required," it is integral to the regular practice of the faith. Services will be held weekly, biweekly, or monthly in different congregations. They begin in the evening and last until dawn. Besides the ingestion of peyote, the service includes as a closing act a ceremonial meal in which water, corn, fruit, and dried beef are shared. Items for worship include peyote, fire (often in the form of live coals), water drum, gourd rattle, and staff. Individual congregations may require additional instruments. Facilities vary. Some groups meet in homes, but many groups meet in a designated hogan or tepee. The worship space contains an altar and fireplace. The traditional hogans will have a moon-shaped altar, the Christian ones a cross-shaped altar with a Bible on it.

**DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS:** None.

**FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS:** Protestant services are acceptable for members. No restrictions are observed with respect to cremation or autopsy.

**MEDICAL TREATMENT:** No restrictions; however, peyote ceremony is used for healing the body.

**OTHER:** The Native American Church is not opposed to military service. The only practice of the Church which might conflict with military directives is the use of peyote.

**GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:**

LaBarre, Weston. *The Peyote Cult*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. 260pp.

Mount, Guy. *The Peyote Book*. Arcata, CA: Sweet Light Books, 1987. 79pp.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Friends of the Native American Church  
Box 307  
Arcata, CA 95521

[Editors note: In recent years the Native American Church has withdrawn from contact with non church members, in part to protect its special status as the sole people able to legally use peyote.]

Figure 1. Native American Church.

**GARDNERIAN WICCA**

ADDRESS: c/o Lady Rhiannon  
Box 6896  
New York, NY 10150

OTHER NAMES BY WHICH KNOWN: Witchcraft; Paganism; Neo-Paganism

LEADERSHIP: No formal leader

MEMBERSHIP: Not reported.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN: Witchcraft or Wicca is a reconstruction of the Old Religion, the tribal worship of ancient peoples based in magic, herbology, healing, and the worship (primarily) of the Mother Goddess and (secondarily) her consort, the Horned God. Witches believe they have existed throughout known history in many parts of the world. The term "witch," more properly "wicca," comes from the Anglo Saxon word for "wise." Wicca's marked revival in the 14th Century is due largely to the work of such scholars as Margaret A. Murray, who traced the existence of the Old Pagan Religion in pre-historic Europe. At the forefront of this revival was Gerald Gardner, the famous witch of the Isle of Man.

After years in the East, Gardner returned to England in the 1930s, located a Wicca group, and was initiated by "Old Dorothy" Clutterbuck. He participated in the "Operation Cone of Power" during World War II, in which English witches joined their magical energies with the prayers of all other religious groups to turn back Hitler's invasion of England. In 1949, he published *High Magic's Aid*, a novel about Medieval Wicca based on his growing knowledge of 14th Century Witchcraft. After repeal of the last anti-Witchcraft law in Britain in 1951, Gardner became publicly prominent. He opened a Museum of Witchcraft on the Isle of Man, and in 1954 published *Witchcraft Today* in which he attacked the idea that Wicca was the worship of Satan and declared himself a witch, devoted to the Mother Goddess. As a result, many witches associated with him and other people contacted him to join the Craft. Those who associated with Gardner, who shared his views of Wicca, and who started to use the rituals he used have come to be called "Gardnerians."

Gardnerian witchcraft was brought to the U.S. by Lady Rowena and her High Priest Robat from England in 1962. Raised in the Church of England, they began to read books on the Craft and eventually to correspond with Gardner. They traveled to the Isle of Man a number of times and were fully initiated, then began to form covens in the United States.

BASIC BELIEFS: Gardnerians worship the Mother Goddess and also the Horned God, symbols of the basic male/female polarity of all nature. They seek the balance within themselves, and with their environment. Worship is often done in pairs, masculine and feminine, and the power which is produced by magical ritual is directed by the High Priestess for its desired purpose. While devotion to the Wiccan deities is the main coven activity, magic, the control and use of natural cosmic forces which emanate from the human mind and body, is the secondary activity of the coven. It is done for healing and for aiding members in various endeavors. Most Witches believe in reincarnation; i.e., that the soul or spirit of the individual will progress through a number of subsequent Earthly lives as it evolves. Retribution for acts in this life will be returned threefold, good or evil, in this life. A reincarnated spirit starts afresh.

Contrary to popular media representations, the Wiccan neither worships nor believes in "the Devil," "Satan," or any other similar entities. They point out that "Satan" is a belief associated with the Judaeo-Christian Tradition, while the Wiccan beliefs are based upon a pagan mythos which

predates the Judaeo-Christian era.

One book used by Gardnerian Wicca is authoritative: The book of Shadows, or book of ritual. In the Gardnerian tradition, these are hand copied from High Priestess to High Priestess. Each High Priestess then shares the information with her coven. They are part of the traditional teachings of the Craft, and are available only to initiates. From coven to coven, the rituals vary slightly. The Gardnerian tradition is an evolved and evolving tradition. Hence, each coven will start with the materials passed on to its High Priestess, and then experiment with new emphases, magical formulas and rituals. The books of Janet and Stewart Farrar (Eight Sabbats for Witches, The Witches' Way, The Witches' Goddess, and The Witches' God) are the best currently available sources on Traditional Wicca. For eclectic Wicca, the best source is Star hawk's The Spiral Dance. Margot Adler's Drawing~ Down the Moon is a useful survey of the larger neo-Pagan movement.

**PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS:** Gardnerian Witches live by the Wiccan Rede: "An Ye Harm None, Do As Ye Will." Within this general concept is the Law of Retribution, by which witches can expect to receive threefold return on their actions.

Social forces generally do not yet allow witches to publicly declare their religious faith without fear of reprisals such as loss of job, ridicule, etc. Rituals, many teachings, and even acknowledgement of affiliation with the Craft are generally not discussed with non-initiates. Ritual instruments are generally hidden and protected.

Eight sabbats, or festivals, important for witches to gather and attune themselves to natural rhythms and forces as the seasons change, are followed: February Eve (January 31), Spring Equinox (March 21), Beltane or May Eve (April 30), Summer Solstice or Midsummer (June 22), Lammas (July 31), Autumn Equinox (September 21), Samhain (October 31) and Yule or Winter Solstice (December 21).

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** Each coven is autonomous, headed by a High Priestess and her High Priest. Covens vary in size from approximately 8 to 14 members. The High Priestess heads the coven. The High Priestess who trained her is recognized as a Queen to whom she can turn for counsel and advice, thus maintaining a lineage of High Priestesses throughout Gardnerian Wicca. Members pass through three initiations, each of which is normally at least a year and a day apart.

**ROLE OF MINISTERS:** The High Priestess and her High Priest are responsible for coven activities, serving both as leaders in the rituals and as teachers for coven members. A High Priestess, or a woman she has delegated, can cast a circle.

**WORSHIP:** Wiccans usually worship as a group. Individual worship is possible, but not generally practiced. Worship takes place in a private location in which a circle can be drawn according to prescribed ritual formulas. Covens meet either weekly or bi-weekly (at the full and new moon), always in the evening. Worship in some (but not all) groups occurs in the nude.

Minimum items for worship include an athame (ritual knife), a bowl of water, a censer with incense, salt, an altar and 6 candles in candlesticks. A sword and pentacle (talisman) are optional. All tools must be ritually consecrated by a High Priestess.

**DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS:** None

**FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS:** None. Recognition of the death of a coven member takes place in the coven, apart from the "body" of the deceased. Ritual tools or material found among the remains of the deceased should be immediately returned to members of the coven. It is not necessary for a priest or priestess to be present at the time of death.

**MEDICAL TREATMENT:** No restrictions, but Wiccans may want co-religionists to do healing rituals in the hospital in tandem with medical treatment. So members of patient's Circle should be permitted ICU visits as though they were immediate family.

**OTHER:** With respect to attitude toward service in the armed forces, members include the full range from career military personnel to conscientious objectors.

Wicca is open toward other faiths, recognizing that the Principles of the Great Mother appears in a great many faiths under various names and symbolisms. Because of the persecutions of past years, Wiccans take a guarded relation to groups which claim to possess "The Truth" or to be the "Only Way." Wicca is only one path among many, and is not for everyone. Members are encouraged to learn about all faiths, and are permitted to attend services of other faiths, should they desire to do so.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Margot Adler. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2nd, ed., 1986. 595pp.

Janet and Stewart Farrar. *Eight Sabbats for Witches*. London: Robert Hale, 1981. 192pp.

*The Witches' Way*. London: Robert Hale, 1984. 349pp.

*The Witches' Goddess*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing, 1987. 319pp.

*The Witches' God*. Custer, WA: Phoenix, 1989. 278pp.

Figure 2. Gardnerian Wicca.

#### WICCA

**ADDRESS:** No central address. Wiccan worship groups, called covens, are essentially autonomous. Many, but far from all, have affiliated with: Covenant of the Goddess, P.O. Box 1226 Berkeley, CA 94704

**OTHER NAMES BY WHICH KNOWN:** Witchcraft; Goddess worshippers; Neo-Paganism, Paganism, Norse (or any other ethnic designation) Paganism, Earth Religion, Old Religion, Druidism, Shamanism. Note: All of these groups have some basic similarities and many surface differences of expression with Wicca.

**LEADERSHIP:** No central leadership. The Covenant of the Goddess annually elects a First Officer and there is a constitutional limit of two consecutive terms, but in practice officers have almost always served for one year only. In 1991, there are two co-First Officers, Phoenix Whitebitch and Brandy Williams.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Because of the complete autonomy of covens, this cannot be determined. There are an estimated of 50,000 Wiccans in the United States.

**HISTORICAL ORIGIN:** Wicca is a reconstruction of the Nature worship of tribal Europe, strongly influenced by the living Nature worship traditions of tribal peoples in other parts of the world. The works of such early twentieth century writers as Margaret Murray, Robert Graves and Gerald B. Gardner began the renewal of interest in the Old Religion. After the repeal of the anti-Witchcraft laws in Britain in 1951, Gardner publicly declared himself a Witch and began to gather a group of students and worshipers. In 1962, two of his students, Raymond and Rosemary Buckland (religious names: Lady Rowen and Robat), emigrated to the United States and began teaching Gardnerian Witchcraft here. At the same time, other groups of people became interested through

reading books by Gardner and others. Many covens were spontaneously formed, using rituals created from a combination of research and individual inspiration. These self-created covens are today regarded as just as valid as those who can trace a "lineage" of teaching back to England. In 1975, a very diverse group of covens who wanted to secure the legal protections and benefits of church status formed Covenant of the Goddess (CoG), which is incorporated in the State of California and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. CoG does not represent all, or even a majority of Wiccans. A coven or an individual need not be affiliated with CoG in order to validly practice the religion. But CoG is the largest single public Wiccan organization, and it is cross-Traditional (i.e. non-denominational).

**BASIC BELIEFS:** Wiccans worship the sacred as immanent in Nature, often personified as Mother Earth and Father Sky. As polytheists, they may use many other names for Deity. Individuals will often choose Goddesses or Gods from any of the world's pantheons whose stories are particularly inspiring and use those Deities as a focus for personal devotions. Similarly, covens will use particular Deity names as a group focus, and these are often held secret by the groups. It is very important to be aware that Wiccans do not in any way worship or believe in "Satan," "the Devil," or any similar entities. They point out that "Satan" is a symbol of rebellion against and inversion of the Christian and Jewish traditions. Wiccans do not revile the Bible. They simply regard it as one among many of the world's mythic systems, less applicable than some to their core values, but still deserving just as much respect as any of the others. Most Wiccan groups also practice magic, by which they mean the direction and use of "psychic energy," those natural but invisible forces which surround all living things. Some members spell the word "magick," to distinguish it from sleight of hand entertainments. Wiccans employ such means as dance, chant, creative visualization and hypnosis to focus and direct psychic energy for the purpose of healing, protecting and aiding members in various endeavors. Such assistance is also extended to non-members upon request. Many, but not all, Wiccans believe in reincarnation. Some take this as a literal description of what happens to people when they die. For others, it is a symbolic model that helps them deal with the cycles and changes within this life. Neither Reincarnation nor any other literal belief can be used as a test of an individual's validity as a member of the Old Religion. Most groups have a handwritten collection of rituals and lore, known as a Book of Shadows. Part of the religious education of a new member will be to hand copy this book for him or herself. Over the years, as inspiration provides, new material will be added. Normally, access to these books is limited to initiated members of the religion.

**PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS:** The core ethical statement of Wicca, called the "Wiccan Rede" states "an it harm none, do what you will." The Rede fulfills the same function as does the "Golden Rule" for Jews and Christians; all other ethical teachings are considered to be elaborations and applications of the Rede. It is a statement of situational ethics, emphasizing at once the individual's responsibility to avoid harm to others and the widest range of personal autonomy in "victimless" activities. Wicca has been described as having a "high-choice" ethic. Because of the basic Nature orientation of the religion, many Wiccans will regard all living things as Sacred, and show a special concern for ecological issues. For this reason, individual conscience will lead some to take a pacifist position. Some are vegetarians. Others will feel that, as Nature's Way includes self-defense, they should participate in wars that they conscientiously consider to be just. The religion does not dictate either position, but requires each member to thoughtfully and meditatively examine her or his own conscience and to live by it. Social forces generally do not yet allow Witches to publicly declare their religious faith without fear of reprisals such as loss of job, child custody challenges, ridicule, etc. Prejudice against Wiccans is the result of public confusion between Witchcraft and Satanism. Wiccans in the military, especially those who may be posted in countries perceived to be particularly intolerant, will often have their dogtags read "No Religious Preference." Concealment is a traditional Wiccan defense against persecution, so non-denominational dogtags should not contravene a member's request for religious services. Wiccans celebrate eight festivals, called "Sabbats," as a means of attunement to the seasonal rhythms of Nature. These are:

January 31 [Called Oimelc, Brigit, or February Eve],  
March 21 [Ostara or Spring Equinox],

April 30 [Beltane or May Eve],  
June 22 [Midsummer, Litha or Summer Solstice],  
July 31 [Lunasa or Lammas],  
September 21 [Harvest, Mabon or Autumn Equinox],  
October 31 [Samhain, Sowyn or Hallows], and  
December 21 [Yule or Winter Solstice].

Some groups find meetings within a few days of those dates to be acceptable, others require the precise date. In addition, most groups will meet for worship at each Full Moon, and many will also meet on the New Moon. Meetings for religious study will often be scheduled at any time convenient to the members, and rituals can be scheduled whenever there is a need (i.e. for a healing). Ritual jewelry is particularly important to many Wiccans. In addition to being a symbol of religious dedication, these talismans are often blessed by the coven back home and felt to carry the coven's protective and healing energy.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** Most Wiccans meet with a coven, a small group of people. Each coven is autonomous. Most are headed by a High Priestess, often with the assistance of a High Priest. Some are headed by a High Priestess or High Priest without a partner, and some regard themselves as a gathering of equals. Covens can be of mixed gender, or all female or male, depending on the preferences of the members. Every initiate is considered to be a priestess or priest. Most covens are small. Thirteen is the traditional maximum number of members, although not an absolute limit. At that size covens form a close bond, so Wiccans in the military are likely to maintain a strong affiliation with their covens back home. There are many distinct "Traditions" of Wicca, just as there are many denominations within Christianity. The spectrum of Wiccan practice can be described as ranging from "traditional" to "eclectic," with Traditions, covens and individuals fitting anywhere within that range. A typical difference would be that more traditional groups would tend to follow a set liturgy, whereas eclectic groups would emphasize immediate inspiration in worship. These distinctions are not particularly important to the military chaplain, since it is unlikely that enough members of any one Tradition would be at the same base. Worship circles at military facilities are likely to be ad-hoc cross-Traditional groups, working out compromise styles of worship for themselves and constantly adapting them to a changing membership. Therefore, the lack of strict adherence to the patterns of any one Tradition is not an indicator of invalidity. While many Wiccans meet in a coven, there are also a number of solitaires. These are individuals who choose to practice their faith alone. They may have been initiated in a coven or self initiated. They will join with other Wiccans to celebrate the festivals or to attend the various regional events organized by the larger community.

**ROLE OF MINISTERS:** Within a traditional coven, the High Priestess, usually assisted by her High Priest, serves both as leader in the rituals and as teacher and counselor for coven members and unaffiliated Pagans. Eclectic covens tend to share leadership more equally.

**WORSHIP:** Wiccans usually worship in groups. Individuals who are currently not affiliated with a coven, or are away from their home coven, may choose to worship privately or may form ad-hoc groups to mark religious occasions. Non-participating observers are not generally welcome at Wiccan rituals. Some, but not all, Wiccan covens worship in the nude ("skyclad") as a sign of attunement with Nature. Most, but not all, Wiccan covens bless and share a cup of wine as part of the ritual. Almost all Wiccans use an individual ritual knife (an "athame") to focus and direct personal energy. Covens often also have ritual swords to direct the energy of the group. These tools, like all other ritual tools, are highly personal and should never leave the possession of the owner. Other commonly used ritual tools include a bowl of water, a bowl of salt, a censer with incense, a disk with symbols engraved on it (a "pentagram"), statues or artwork representing the Goddess and God, and candles. Most groups will bless and share bread or cookies along with the wine. All of these items are used in individual, private worship as well as in congregative rituals.

**DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS:** None.

**FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS:** None. Recognition of the death of a member takes place within the coven, apart from the body of the deceased. Ritual tools, materials, or writings

found among the effects of the deceased should be returned to their home coven (typically a member will designate a person to whom ritual materials should be sent). It is desirable for a Wiccan priest or priestess to be present at the time of death, but not strictly necessary. If not possible, the best assistance would be to make the member as comfortable as possible, listen to whatever they have to say, honor any possible requests, and otherwise leave them as quiet and private as possible.

**MEDICAL TREATMENT:** No medical restrictions. Wiccans generally believe in the efficacy of spiritual or psychic healing when done in tandem with standard medical treatment. Therefore, at the request of the patient, other Wiccan personnel should be allowed visiting privileges as though they were immediate family, including access to Intensive Care Units. Most Wiccans believe that healing energy can be sent from great distances, so, if possible, in the case of any serious medical condition, the member's home coven should be notified.

**OTHER:** With respect to attitude toward military service, Wiccans range from career military personnel to conscientious objectors. Wiccans do not proselytize and generally resent those who do. They believe that no one Path to the Sacred is right for all people, and see their own religious pattern as only one among many that are equally worthy. Wiccans respect all religions that foster honor and compassion in their adherents, and expect the same respect. Members are encouraged to learn about all faiths, and are permitted to attend the services of other religions, should they desire to do so.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS

The best general survey of the Wiccan and neo-Pagan movement is: Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986. 595pp

For more specific information about eclectic Wicca, see: Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

For more specific information about traditional Wicca, see: Farrar, Janet, and Stewart Farrar: *Eight Sabbats for Witches*. London: Robert Hale, 1981. 192pp.

*The Witches' Way*. London: Robert Hale, 1984. 394pp.

Figure 3. Wicca.



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